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ABSTRACT

This report analyzes the function of a continuing education and training (CET) counseling service in a regional context on the basis of the experience of the CET Counseling Center (CETCC) of the city of Cologne, Germany. Section 2 describes the methodology and considers the role of a CET counseling service as a platform for regional structural development. Section 3 describes the structure of CET provision in Germany and the regional impact of general continuing vocational training conditions. Section 4 puts the CETCC into a regional context by discussing the social and geographical structure of the region. It describes the two main fields of CET counseling: individual and institutional. Section 5 analyzes four long-term projects with reference to cooperation among CET establishments, authorities, counseling services, and social agencies and the regional impact of such cooperation. Section 6 evaluates the cooperative projects. Methodological, content-related, and organizational aspects are compared, their effects on the region estimated, and infrastructural improvement examined. Contains 15 references. (YLB)

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Continuing education and training counselling services in a regional frame of reference

An analysis of cooperation structures

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

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Continuing education and training counselling services in a regional frame of reference — An analysis of cooperation structures

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FOREWORD

Cologne, a city with more than 1 million inhabitants, is the most important centre of economic activity in North Rhein-Westphalia in spite of an unemployment rate of some 10%. The structure of trade and industry is extremely diversified. The city has rich and diversified training provisions at its disposal.

In this Federal Land, the legislation on continuing training affirms the pluralism of the bodies concerned as a fundamental principle of continuing training. The diversity of institutions is an expression of this pluralism and bears witness to the importance attached to continuing training by all those involved in the sphere. The latter are becoming increasingly aware of the need to cooperate, to overcome their reticence and fear of competition in order to ensure a harmonious, comprehensive and transparent offer of continuing training. This report examines the reasons for the progressive orientation towards setting up "continuing training counselling units". Although for decades a need has been expressed to institutionalize information and advice on these issues, in the Federal Republic of Germany the awareness has grown only very slowly of the need to set up such bodies independent of those offering continuing training..

In seeking examples of signs of evaluation by/with those involved, CEDEFOP included in six case studies that of the unit in Cologne. The activities of this unit which has long-term aims illustrate all the cooperation mechanisms tested and their regional effects in four areas: literacy, continuing training of women, the use of paid leave for training purposes and continuing training as a preparation for the introduction of new technologies. To demonstrate a direct relationship between aims and results the agents/assessors include in this document their replies to fundamental operational issues. If this analysis is found to be encouraging, as the editors remark in their conclusions, it is "because the partners are intent upon promoting compromise and on forgetting conflict in order to reach their common aims".

Maria Pierret

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1. Introduction

Continuing education and training (CET) are increasingly becoming an integral part of career biographies. Above all on account of the changes in the fields of technology and labour organization and the general improvement in the average skills profile, it is becoming increasingly infrequent for education/training processes to conclude at the point of completion of initial training. A survey conducted by Infratest Sozialforschung (see Berichtssystem Weiterbildungsverhalten 1989) shows that every third person in the Federal Republic of Germany participated in some form of CET in 1988.

The market character of CET has been above all reinforced by the expansion of commercial establishments against the background of the traditionally pluralistic structure of this sector in the Federal Republic of Germany. This trend has rendered provision increasingly untransparent for those seeking CET. It is not only extremely difficult to find the programme to suit one's individual situation, the suitability of the programme in question must be evaluated, a cost benefit analysis effected and the actual usefulness of the respective scheme considered. Moreover, in particular the educationally disadvantaged or those unaccustomed to learning must be specifically addressed and encouraged if they are to be motivated for lifelong continuing learning.

Educational/training counselling may help solve

information, orientation and decision-making problems; it adds to the transparency of the various CET schemes and makes it easier to match participants' interests with CET provision; it can also plug determined needs and interests into the planning of CET by counselling the relevant institutions. With its cooperation activities, CET counselling services thus contribute to improving the regional infrastructure and thereby represent an important factor of overall regional development.

However, although the institutionalization of information and counselling provision has been called for at both national and international level for decades, awareness of the need for in particular independent CET agencies is only developing gradually in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The object of this report is to analyse the function of a CET counselling service in a regional context, as described above, on the basis of the experience of the CET Counselling Centre of the City of Cologne (CETCC). The CETCC is one of the very few firmly established bodies of its kind in the Federal Republic of Germany which has acquired many years of experience with the cooperation structures described. For this reason we wish to discuss in greater detail the following long-term activities of the CETCC as particularly good examples of well-tested cooperation structures and the regional impact:

- Literacy

The literacy cooperation network established in 1984 now comprises over 20 CET establishments from the Cologne area. The CETCC acts as the "headquarters" of this cooperation process. Decisions on the content and organizational aspects of joint projects are taken by the cooperative management body in which the CET establishments and the CETCC are represented. Course leaders and full-time staff from the CET establishments and CETCC representatives meet in the framework of working parties to consider pedagogical matters. The CETCC also acts as cooperation partner for media representatives, politicians, administrations, teachers, schools, the educational psychology service, various authorities and supra-regional facilities working in the literacy field.

- CET for women

A second key activity of the CETCC is work with women. The Centre issues regular information brochures on current regional educational and training provision for women and has published a handbook with a compilation of CET programmes specifically catering for women. The women's course programme is coordinated with CET agencies at regular meetings. For example, special part-time job induction programmes for single mothers in combination with child care facilities have been launched in collaboration with the youth welfare office, the equal opportunities unit, the social welfare office and other institutions.

- New technologies

The spread of information and communication technologies has confronted the education and training system with new tasks. CET provision in the field of "new technologies" has soared in recent years. The CETCC issues publications to help structure this maze of provision. It has also set up working parties in which the organizing bodies are represented as a forum of cooperation to improve the structure of provision for beginners' and advanced EDP courses for specific target groups. In the field of education and training promotion and information activities, the "computer information week", during which 22 CET establishments present their training and further training schemes in the field of EDP, is organized every year.

- Educational/training leave

The Continuing Education and Training for Workers Act of 1985 guarantees all workers in North-Rhine Westphalia the right to paid leave for continuing education/training purposes. The CETCC has conducted broadly-based PR activities to provide information on the new regulations and planned educational leave provision. In conjunction with CET establishments, it has devised a special strategy for an educational/training leave seminar for shift workers and an action programme entitled "Educational/training leave in Cologne", consisting of an information week and an educational/training leave week with programmes specifically designed for 14 client groups. In 1990 the Cologne educational/training leave

working party was established as a cooperation body.

In evaluating the above-mentioned projects, attention has particularly focused on the shaping of the cooperation process, the degree of success achieved, the obstacles to be surmounted and the extent to which the project as a whole contributed to improving the overall regional educational/training and employment situation.

2. Methodology

The qualitative evaluation concept

Our study involved qualitative evaluative research, whereby, among others, the target perspective was to encourage organizations to introduce changes by providing documentation and stimulating reflection on their activities. The activities of organizations and their projects and programmes were evaluated with the aim of improving the practice of these programmes and the institution in question. From the point of view of scientific theory, the term qualitative evaluative research subsumes approaches which assume that an experimental survey design only inadequately reflects social reality (cf. Kraus 1991, p. 412). A central target of such evaluative studies is to elaborate concrete proposals for the users. In contrast, generalizability is not a primary research aim of evaluative research.

A problem encountered with this type of evaluative research is that it is extremely difficult to identify and evaluate complex realities and to derive sufficiently coherent results to substantiate organizational decision-making processes. To come closer to achieving this aim, interaction between researchers and players must be as intensive as possible - which was in fact the case in the present evaluation study. The resulting wealth of material providing a description of real situations was subsequently exchanged. The result of this process is a

study which attempts to adequately represent the views of reality of as many players as possible, to highlight divergent positions and thus provide a basis for conclusions and recommendations.

Decision-making processes are conceptualized as multi-faceted negotiating processes among various players with many more dimensions than merely superficial, rational problem management.

However, the principle of triangulation was used to ensure a maximum degree of inter-subjective reliability (cf. Kraus, 1991, p. 414), i.e. information, data or statements were only accepted as true if confirmed by another source; this process can also be called "context validation".

However, a problem which should not be disregarded in these forms of qualitative evaluative research is that the subjectivity of the researchers may be influenced by the surveyed persons and their attitudes. It can nevertheless be assumed that the participation of the researchers creates a certain degree of distance in the research context. Moreover, there are various approaches of formalizing the reflection of the research process which help contain this risk.

The most radical solution to a new evaluation perception is the concept of "self-evaluation organization" (cf. Woldavsky 1972), i.e. the principle that an organization acquires self-reflective potential. This objective is

close to that of the present study in that the players were closely integrated into the research process.

The regional study

A wide-ranging consensus exists today that vocational skilling is an important factor of regional development: in some cases skilling is attributed a decisive impetus function, triggering innovations and subsequent investments. At the same time there is increasing scepticism of isolated investment and technology promotion. Many companies and public-sector economic and technology promoters have had to revise their belief that provision of hardware solves all the application problems. Many an expensive facility has become an investment "white elephant" as a result of a dearth of suitable skills among the users.

In the field of regional employment policy, policy areas which previously tended to be strictly segregated have become increasingly decompartmentalized. Perspectives for a better coordinated regional employment policy are considered to lie in a regionalization of regional policy and in the development of endogenous development potential created in the region itself. Considerations on the promotion of the endogenous potentials of the region start out from the transversal character of regional structures; they are based on the perspectives of the development potential to be found in the region itself which may trigger a skill-led innovation process, new technologies

and new products. Approaches for such structural policy strategies lie in the activation of development potentials, especially in areas in which potentials act as obstacles (e.g. environmental pollution/skilling). In order to accomplish these strategies, the appropriate instruments must be found and the organizing bodies and responsible persons appointed to develop them. The following report discusses the role of a CET counselling service as a platform for regional structural development.

In this context, the focus is on the initial consideration, i.e. that the fragmented CET landscape requires a greater degree of coordination if the importance of CET for regional development is to be better utilized.

3. CET structures and the current status of CET counselling provision in the Federal Republic of Germany

3.1 CET structures

In order to provide an adequate explanation of the need, status and task profile of CET counselling services, a brief description of the structure of CET provision in the Federal Republic of Germany and the regional impact of general continuing vocational training conditions is first of all necessary.

In general terms, a sectoral differentiation is drawn between general, political and vocational CET. General continuing education includes all forms of basic education, e.g. second-chance and extension courses and schemes confronting individuals with the status of societal knowledge. The purpose of political education is to provide information and help individuals form an opinion on issues and problems requiring public debate and political decisions (cf. Weinberg 1989, p. 20). Continuing vocational training serves to match vocational skills with changes in job requirements (updating training) or the acquisition of skills for career advancement (upgrading training). Retraining schemes, on the other hand, involve the completion by adults of an initial or a completely new vocational training programme.

General and political continuing education is above all

structured by legislation at Länder level. The Continuing Education and Training and the Continuing Education and Training for Workers Acts are the decisive legislative instruments of North-Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), i.e. the Land in which Cologne is situated.

Article 17 of the NRW Constitution stipulates that "adult education/training shall be promoted. Apart from the state, local authorities and municipal associations, other organizing bodies, e.g. churches and voluntary bodies, are recognized as the sponsors of adult education/training establishments". The first Act on the Regulation and Promotion of Continuing Education and Training in NRW (abbreviated as the CET Act in the following) and the Act on the Release of Workers for Purposes of Vocational and Political Continuing Education and Training (abbreviated in the following as the CET for Workers Act or the Educational Leave Act) spell out this constitutional task and provide the legal framework for the activities of CET establishments.

The CET Act, which came into force in 1975, provides structural regulations for CET and states the conditions under which establishments are entitled to financial assistance from the Land. The aim of the Act is to ensure that CET supply caters for the demand in this field. Among the organizing bodies, adult education centres (AECs) have a special role given their task of ensuring basic provision for the population in seven different fields listed in the CET Act (see below). Other organizing bodies

decide their provision in accordance with their priorities. CET development plans are drawn up for the purposes of consultation on the necessary basic provision.

In accordance with the CET Act, provision in NRW is divided into the following specific fields:

- non-vocational education leading to a certificate,
- vocational training,
- scientific training,
- political training,
- leisure-oriented and creative education/training,
- parental and family education,
- person-related education/training,

whereby vocational training events are not generally funded under the CET Act. CET organizing bodies and establishments receive Land subsidies in particular for their full- and part-time staff.

The CET Act confirms the principle of a plurality of CET organizing bodies in NRW. The diversity of establishments is regarded as an expression of societal plurality, reflecting the importance accorded to CET by the various social groups. The organizing bodies and their establishments have various legal forms. In many cases they have direct legal ties with social groups or institutions such as churches and trade unions; in other cases they are legally independent.

The CET for Workers Act, which came into effect on 1 January 1985, contains provisions relating to those people who may claim entitlement to release from employment for CET purposes, and the length of such entitlement - currently five days per year.

Against the background of these legal provisions, the following tasks for the design of CET are found at local and regional level:

- planning of specific education/training provision (determination of needs, programme development),
- coordination of overall regional provision,
- information and counselling services for interested persons,
- cooperation between educational/training organizing bodies, infrastructure expansion.

Continuing vocational training is subject to fewer norms and regulations than general and political continuing education; three areas can initially be differentiated in this field:

- In-company continuing training

This form of CET essentially caters for skilled workers and managers. The firms themselves may be the providers of continuing training for their workers; they may also draw on the continuing training provision of other organizing bodies, especially if they have no adequate continuing training infrastructures of their own or are unable to

implement a specific scheme themselves.

- Continuing training implemented on the basis of the Law on the Promotion of Employment (LPE)

The LPE, adopted in 1969 and frequently amended, was originally intended to develop additional manpower potential in times of skill shortages. Meanwhile, against the background of the high unemployment rate, the LPE has developed into an instrument which primarily serves to provide continuing training for the unemployed or those threatened by unemployment.

- Individual CET

CET sought by individuals on the CET market, independently of institutional dependencies.

The three sub-areas of continuing vocational training cannot be distinguished in absolute terms since they may overlap at various interfaces (e.g. continuing training promoted by the LPE and individual CET in the field of updating and upgrading training). With reference to key features (e.g. target groups, structure of provision, function and funding), in particular the first two sub-areas show an independent feature profile.

Continuing vocational training is also generally provided by educational/training organizing bodies and firms at local or local/regional level in the Federal Republic of Germany. Planning at regional level facilitates flexible and dynamic design of continuing training schemes. However

skills acquired in the framework of continuing training should not only be suitable for a specific job, company or region, but also deployable on the overall supra-regional labour market. Precisely because the German education/training system is characterized by highly standardized training and continuing training structures, it is an important objective for workers to enhance their (supra-)regional labour market position by means of CET. This means that regional provision must take account of supra-regional requirements and regulations.

The Vocational Training and Craft Trades Acts contain a number of framework provisions governing continuing vocational training, especially in cases involving standardized certificates. Continuing training promoted by the LPE is determined by the provisions of this federal law and the division of tasks within the administrative levels of the Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, the federal manpower services. In cases in which there are no federal training regulations or regionally valid provisions issued by the chambers of industry and commerce, continuing vocational training is regulated to a much less extent than initial vocational training.

At local/regional level, continuing vocational training is characterized by cooperation between the job centres and educational/training organizing bodies. In the field of in-company continuing training, the regional/local company level is predominant, i.e. companies can decide themselves what type of continuing training they wish to provide for

which employees or groups of employees; their action is at most limited by the provisions of the Law on Labour Relations at the Workplace or collective agreements.

In the framework of this spectrum of tasks, a CET counselling service assumes a key structural function as a broker.

3.2 The current status of CET provision

Although the institutionalization of information and counselling provision as a fundamental condition for the implementation of lifelong learning process has been called for for decades in both national and international contexts (cf. UNESCO Commission 1973, p. 33), a serious deficit of counselling services still exists today.

Counselling is rarely perceived as a central task of the staff of adult education and training establishments. In cases in which counselling does take place, it is generally restricted to referral to the provision of the institution in question. Job centres provide counselling on continuing vocational training opportunities, in particular with reference to the Law on the Promotion of Employment. However since counselling related to continuing vocational training only accounts for a sub-area of the various tasks of the job centres with their limited personnel resources, their counselling services are frequently considered inadequate (cf. Bujok 1988). Finally, counselling is also provided by the

chambers, economic associations or similar bodies within the framework of their respective tasks. The serious deficit is primarily the lack of an open and accessible form of counselling, independent of organizing bodies and interests, which moreover not only offers counselling for individuals or groups, but may also contribute to the networking and improvement of the continuing training provision of the region in question.

An initial phase of increased interest in CET was observed in the 1970s in parallel with the general debate on the reform of the educational/training system and initiatives to promote equal opportunities. Two key education/training policy reports of the 1970s - the Strukturplan Weiterbildung ("CET structural plan") (cf. Arbeitskreis Strukturplan 1975) and the report of the "Joint municipal unit for administrative simplification" (1973) - called for the establishment of counselling centres as part and parcel of lifelong learning to promote cooperation between research, planning and policymaking in the field of education/training.

The establishment of independent counselling centres gained an initial impetus from the series of pilot projects initiated by the Federal Ministry for Education and Science on the establishment of counselling centres primarily catering for the unemployed (cf. Braun/Fischer 1984). These pilot projects were launched at a time when the swelling ranks of the unemployed had created a serious social policy problem.

However following this series of pilot projects, the broad public commitment to CET counselling quickly subsided, among other reasons as a result of the financial problems of the public authorities. Today, however, interest in this field is reemerging, although the reform of the education/training system has faded into the background and the focus is now on providing guidance related to an increasingly complicated market.

Most independent counselling centres are sponsored by local authorities and are often responsible to the local education office. In addition, some are organized as voluntary associations. All the independent counselling centres receive public funding in various forms, either directly via the local authority, indirectly via subsidies from the respective Land or from project-related sources (cf. Kejcz 1988, p. 170).

Major differences can be observed between existing CET counselling centres in terms of their staffing and material resources. Many facilities are manned by only two specialized members of staff, generally graduates in social sciences, and a part-time clerk.

The target perspective of counselling work is to provide clients with guidance and assistance in decision-making, empowering them to make a choice of training provision in tune with their respective life situation which will promote the development of their personalities and help them take advantage of vocational and societal

opportunities (cf. Wack 1982, p. 29). In this context, it is above all a question of breaking down inhibitions about the use of CET provision, especially among client groups unaccustomed to learning, it having been recognized that participation in continuing education/training still rises as a function of the educational/training level already acquired. Education/training counselling may help to promote equal opportunities by providing activating forms of educational/training promotion and information and by initiating preparatory measures leading to access to the institutionalized continuing education/training system. By feeding back deficits in the provision structure observed by counselling clients and latent educational/training needs to CET establishments and organizing bodies, counselling centres may contribute to matching CET provision and needs (cf. Kejcz 1988, p. 30f). Counselling thereby fulfills a dual function in the CET field: on the one hand, the counselling of individual clients and, on the other, the counselling of institutions on the provider side.

The various target groups addressed by CET centres require different forms and strategies as far as approaching and counselling clients is concerned. The task profile of individual counselling centres will therefore be largely determined by their priority target groups. The counselling of educationally marginalized population groups must firstly arouse learning needs and support the articulation of these needs.

The basis for the counselling process is the evaluation and processing of information relating to the CET field and corresponding provision in the region, whereby counselling should not be restricted to the indication of existing provision with its aims, target groups, methods and forms, but must also include the general legal conditions, e.g. funding arrangements, standardized certificates, etc. Over and above a personal counselling interview, information may also be provided upstream or downstream in the form of information sheets, pamphlets or brochures.

Since the counselling of CET establishments and organizing bodies links up providers and those seeking CET, the spectrum of a centre's tasks also includes the determination of needs. Experience has shown that needs expressed by counselling clients which are not covered by existing provision are related to certain aspects of content, didactics/methodology or time aspects of CET organization. The focus of institutional counselling lies in the feedback to CET establishments of the determined needs in terms of provision and programme planning, whereby it should not be overlooked that given the existing heterogeneity of the CET market, competition among providers is to be expected.

To summarize the existing experience of independent counselling centres and in response to the question as to how corresponding provision should be designed to make an optimal contribution to regional development, it is

clearly a question of networking the following target groups/institutions:

- clients or specific target groups seeking advice,
- CET establishments,
- other counselling services,
- industry, including employers, workers and their representatives and professional associations in the social and geographical environment,
- multipliers, advertising facilities, media,
- authorities, political bodies.

A body networking these various establishments, target groups and institutions is presumably the essential relevant educational/training network of influence and action in the region. The task of such counselling centres is to determine CET needs, to arouse endogenous CET needs, analyse and process provision from the structural and training policy angle, rendering it transparent, developing it in terms of needs which can be articulated and anticipated and in particular linking up the different activities and institutions.

4. The CET counselling centre of the City of Cologne in the regional context

4.1 The social and geographical structure of the region

As the focal point of an extensive economic, cultural and administrative catchment area, Cologne is the economic centre of gravity of a region consisting of the municipalities of Cologne and Leverkusen and the Erft, Oberbergisch and Rheinischbergisch districts.

Of its total population of almost 1 million, approx. 430 000 persons were in gainful employment with the obligation to pay social security contributions in 1991. Along with workers in unprotected employment situations, the total number of those employed in Cologne is approx. half a million.

The city is the most important economic and industrial centre of the Land of NRW. The structure of its manufacturing industries is extremely diversified: the city's 43 large-scale industrial firms with a workforce of over 1 000 include various sectors ranging from the automotive, chemical and petrochemical, cosmetic and pharmaceutical and electrical engineering industries.

Some 150 000 workers are currently employed in the manufacturing industries, 130 000 in commerce, transport, banks and assurance and a further 130 000 in other services and agriculture (cf. City of Cologne n.d.).

41 200 persons were registered as unemployed in June 1991 (cf. Arbeitsamt Köln 1991, p. 1 for these and the following figures), when the unemployment rate had fallen below 10% for the first time since 1982. It must however be assumed that the actual number of jobless is higher than the rate in the official statistics.

59.7% of the jobless were men and 40.3% women. The unemployment rate stood at 9.4% among women and 10.3% among men. Young people under 20 accounted for 2.4% and the severely disabled for 5.9% of the total number of unemployed. Ethnic minorities continued to constitute a high proportion of the total number of unemployed: 21.7%.

Some 61% of the unemployed had not completed any form of vocational training. This sub-group, largely those made redundant in the wake of rationalization measures, is one of the main problems of the Cologne labour market. These people are not only faced with an extremely precarious life situation, but also have little prospect of finding a job since the proportion of lesser skilled workers sought by firms is falling, as the demand for skilled workers grows.

Measures to stimulate economic growth therefore serve the common interests of both the municipality and Cologne firms by aiming at providing training/further training schemes for the local manpower potential in accordance with the process of economic development. This is

particularly important when one considers that the availability of skilled workers is gaining importance as an industrial location factor, as confirmed by a study of the Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft in 1989 (cf. Kölner Wirtschafts- und Arbeitsmarktbericht 1990, p. 65). Moreover, because of its structural orientation, the Cologne economic area is highly dependent on the availability of skilled workers and positive economic development generates a further demand for skilled workers. The result is a structural gap between existing manpower potential and the demand of the firms. CET and counselling in this field can help strike a balance in this respect.

It is also striking to note that women are still over-represented among the ranks of the unemployed. Although an increase can be observed in both the proportion of women with a vocational training certificate and the percentage of female trainees, women nevertheless still tend to be concentrated in "pink" sectors and occupational groups, e.g. office work, department store sales assistants, the caring professions, hairdressing, sales assistants.

On top of this, women are still more apt to be found in part-time employment and relegated to "precarious" job situations in the wake of rationalization measures and the introduction of new technologies in the retail trade, offices and administrations.

The June 1991 Cologne job centre's labour market report (cf. Arbeitsamt Köln 1991, p. 2) observed that vocational skilling has an important role as a means of combatting and preventing joblessness, even in times of declining unemployment. Precisely against the background of increasing job demands and the rapid change in vocational content, career advancement schemes and retraining are regarded as an ongoing labour market policy task. In June 1991, 6 723 persons from the Cologne job centre catchment area, 3 723 of whom previously unemployed, participated in career advancement schemes on the basis of the Law on the Promotion of Employment.

An evaluation of the Cologne economic and labour market policy in 1987 assessed initial training and continuing training as follows: "the youth welfare office, the adult education centre and the education and training counselling services have developed new forms of provision. However these measures are not adequate for a labour market-oriented local training policy which, following the analysis of the economic and labour market strategy, is primarily geared towards the subsequent skilling of the majority of the unemployed who have received no vocational training".

Cologne offers a wide and diversified range of training and continuing training opportunities. Its schools provide the entire spectrum of both general and vocational education. In fact, all forms of school to be found in NRW are represented in the City.

With over 80 000 students attending a total of 11 institutes of higher education - the specialized college of further education (Fachhochschule), the university, the German sports university, the specialized college of library studies, the higher school of music, the arts school for media, a private specialized college of higher education, a church-run college of higher education, two specialized public administration colleges of higher education and the open university centre of studies - the Rhine metropolis is one of the Europe's leading centres of higher education.

The Cologne continuing training arena is also characterized by organizational, geographical and functionally differentiated fragmentation. The result, among others, is a lack of transparency and a certain degree of competition among providers, even if many continuing training establishments are increasingly recognizing the need for cooperation and a number of models of cooperation have already been established, as observed by the continuing training development plan for the years 1987-1992 (p. 410):

"Models of cooperation can be found along ideological lines, e.g. among church-run continuing training establishments ("Stadtteilgespräche") or in cases of common or related problem areas in the form of initiatives or working parties in the fields of educational and training leave, cultural education, courses catering for women, family education centres, adult literacy programmes and a cinema project showing films from and relating to the Third World....
Of all the cooperation projects, those of the education/training establishments are the most important

in the light of the large number of central fields of cooperation; they should therefore be intensified and institutionalized".

Continuing education and training courses are provided by over 300 establishments in Cologne, with different tasks, volume of provision and organizing bodies. The diversity of organizing bodies ranges from those recognized under the CET Act (25 organizing bodies with 33 CET centres, e.g. adult education centres, church-run bodies, trade unions, employers, associations, etc.) through commercial providers to firms and administrations.

Most continuing vocational training is implemented by CET establishments specialized in this sub-area of CET and sometimes even geared towards specific client groups. Funding of provision through the LPE plays a central role in these establishments; only a small proportion of continuing vocational training is implemented by bodies which also provide general and political CET.

For example, in 1991, the Cologne AEC, with its over 30 full-time pedagogical members of staff and over 1 700 part-time course leaders, provided almost 210 000 hours of tuition (both centralized and decentralized), catering for almost 100 000 participants (75% women, 25% men), over 25 000 of whom attended continuing vocational training courses.

A total of over 300 000 hours of tuition, over 36 000 of which in the field of continuing vocational training, are offered by the AEC and the recognized CET establishments.

Voluntary associations account for approx. two-thirds and the municipal AEC one-third of this provision. 15% of participants come from the area around Cologne. The volume of provision of all the continuing training establishments recognized by the CET Act amounts to some 12 000 events, involving approx. 352 000 hours of tuition and approx. 580 events with approx. 23 000 participant days. Of this provision, voluntary associations account for a total of approx. 7 250 events (60%), approx. 187 000 hours of tuition (53%) and approx. 22 000 participant days (95%) and the AEC for approx. 4 800 events (40%), approx. 165 000 hours of tuition (47%) and approx. 1 100 participant days (5%). Of the voluntary associations, the provision of church-sponsored CET establishments is the largest (cf. Weiterbildungsentwicklungsplan 1987-1992 der Stadt Köln).

The CET development plan for the years 1987-1992 notes that it is impossible to give an exact general description of the general education and training situation in a given planning area since the establishments recognized under the CET Act do not all furnish the necessary data according to the established criteria and with the appropriate explanations. The reason for this is considered to lie above all in the unclear and half-hearted Land regulations on the elaboration of municipal CET development plans which leave many of the elements necessary for an inventory optional. Another reason is certainly the fact that Land promotion of CET is inadequate and stagnating. In fact, what is the point of

such a development plan if no sanctions are envisaged in cases of non-participation or inadequate information? The figures available are virtually unsuitable for purposes of reliable evaluation and generally only permit the planners to draw conclusions on trends.

Against the background of a pan-societal situation characterized by pluralism, unemployment and an accelerated pace of change in all walks of life, and in a context of societal standards which include the principle of education/training as a lifelong learning process, the right to CET, equal opportunities and the extension of co- and self-determination, the CET plan for the years 1982-1987 lays down the following target areas: "regionalization of CET, intensification of work with the educationally disadvantaged (target group work), the combatting of unemployment and its social and psychological consequences". These fields are also pinpointed as the deficits of previous CET programmes.

In this context, CET should not only cover, but also stimulate demand, whereby a programme covering demand should emerge from the demand as determined and assumed, i.e. it should be demand-oriented and primarily geared towards the systematics of scientific disciplines. According to the CET development plan, such a programme can above all be improved by taking account of inter-disciplinary demands and life problems, harmonizing and systematizing CET provision, in particular in large-scale CET establishments, achieving sufficient

differentiation between specialized subjects, creating appropriate strategies of participant recruitment and participant-oriented design of educational/training schemes, providing for greater involvement than hitherto of participants in programme design, and bringing provision physically closer to potential target clients by a systematic dispersion and extension of the number of event locations in terms of a "duplication model".

Since this CET "market model" fails to reach educationally disadvantaged population groups, CET provision must also stimulate demand. Whereas the "they've got to come to us" approach is typical of demand-oriented CET, the "we've got to go to them" approach is characteristic of demand-stimulating CET, i.e. target group work. This means that the educationally disadvantaged must be mobilized for learning processes by catering for their specific life situations and using an outreach approach. The classical, discipline-oriented division of education/training provision largely fails in the case of this target group. Target group work must be possible across the entire specialized field and systematically inserted into overall provision (cf. Weiterbildungsentwicklungsplan 1982-1987 der Stadt Köln).

This situation implies consequences for both the need for and the practical work of CET counselling.

4.2 Self-concept, task profile and working results of the CETCC

The independent CET Counselling Centre of the City of Cologne functions on a decentralized basis with a specific social structure in four city districts with rampant unemployment and a high proportion of residents with no school-leaving or vocational training certificate. The CETCC's work is addressed to these target groups in particular.

CET counselling encompasses a wide spectrum of activities which can be summarized as follows;

- O addressing the target group/PR for CET promotional activities
- O counselling (individual and group counselling) and information on CET programmes related to school-leaving certificates, vocational training and general education
- O institutional counselling/cooperation with continuing training establishments and other relevant institutions.

Addressing the target group, PR work and publicity for CET promotional activities all involve the use of posters, hand-outs, newspaper advertisements, multipliers and the publication of information brochures, e.g. on "second

chance" schemes (school-leaving certificates) training and continuing training opportunities in the fields of new technologies or environmental protection.

Cooperation with multiplier(s) - including members of staff of other counselling centres, authorities and works councils - has proven to be particularly important for target group work.

The two main fields of CET counselling are individual counselling and institutional counselling.

Individual counselling

Here the focus is on motivation, guidance and support in the decision-making process for clients seeking advice on the basis of information on local, regional and supra-regional CET provision.

The view of the CETCC is that clients' needs should be the central yardstick for CET counselling aimed at promoting adult education/training. The principle of its CET counselling is the promotion of adult clients' self-determined motivation and decision-making capacity for which they themselves are responsible - evidently in the framework of the socially conditioned opportunities of the respective client's life situation. This concept of counselling presupposes current and intrinsic motivation which implies, among others, that clients must seek advice voluntarily. Experience has shown that many clients are going through a phase of major transition. The pressure

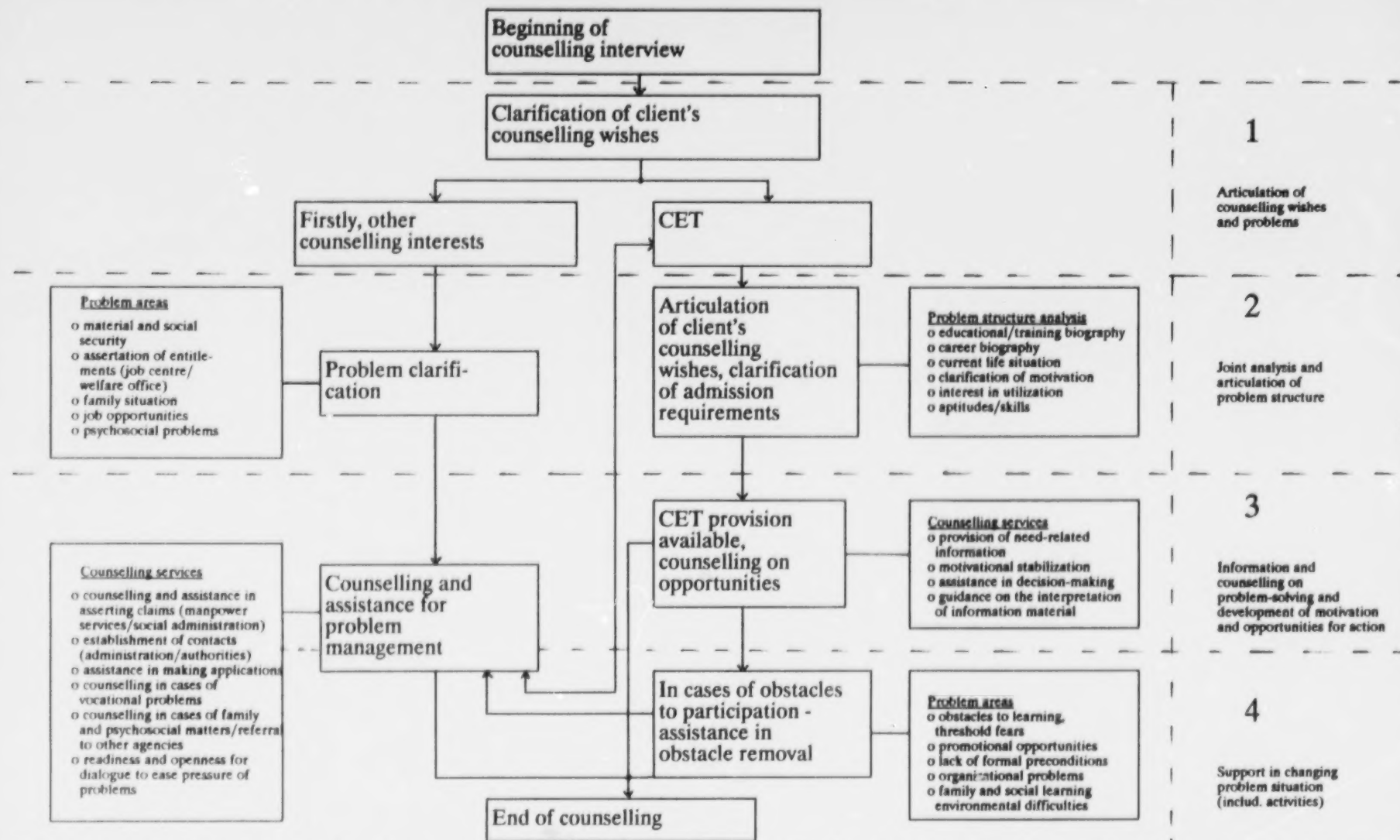
due to this problem triggers current motivation. CET is regarded as an opportunity to solve the problems at hand. For example, participation in a CET scheme may improve a client's chances of getting out of unemployment and returning to working life or cushion the psychological and social effects of joblessness.

There may of course be barriers to participation in a CET scheme, e.g. the question of funding, but above all the conflict between "appetite" and "aversion", i.e. that CET on the one hand has a certain appeal since it may offer a way out of one's dilemma, but that due to a negative attitude towards education/training or negative experience in this field - habitual motivation - it may thus trigger avoidance reactions.

Clients seeking advice may be differentiated according to their often relatively unclear CET wishes and their possible illusions with respect to CET. The socialization experience brought into the counselling situation - at best of course only partly "highlighted" - demonstrates the complexity of the demands on CET counsellors' attitudes and behaviour.

The course of counselling may be analytically structured according to the following action fields (see flow diagram on the next page): the flow diagram also shows the structure of interaction steps and theme sequences, whereby it is not absolutely indispensable to follow the indicated sequence of action steps.

FLOW DIAGRAM: CET COUNSELLING INTERVIEW



Counselling encompasses three subject-areas, with a different weighting given to each interview:

- the client's personal details
 - personal and career biography
 - personal and social difficulties
 - client's preconditions and skills
- the client's social environment
 - material conditions of life and work situation
 - influences of the social environment on the client's possibilities of action
- development of action and decision-making opportunities leading to CET participation
 - information
 - articulation of latent CET interests
 - motivation
 - counselling in decision-making
 - breaking down obstacles to access
 - assistance in achieving CET participation.

This shows that CET counselling goes beyond counselling on course choice and learning and covers the psycho-social elements of the client's life situation as an integral part of the counselling concept.

The essential aspects of CET counselling are therefore information, motivation and support, as well as consideration and articulation of the client's life and

problem situation.

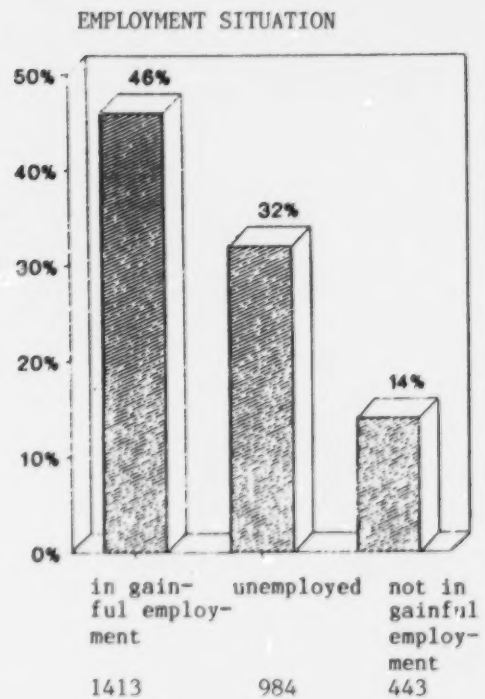
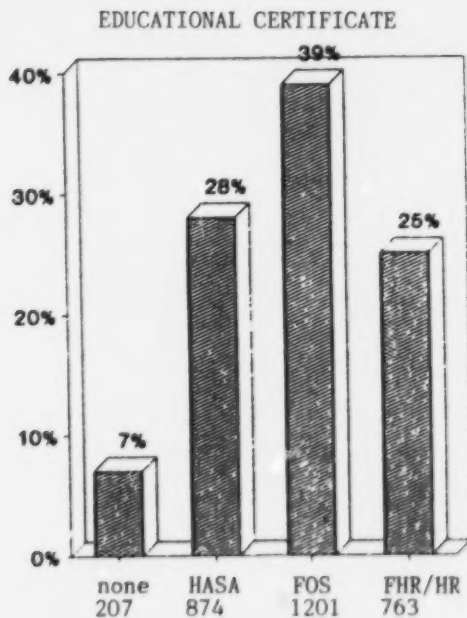
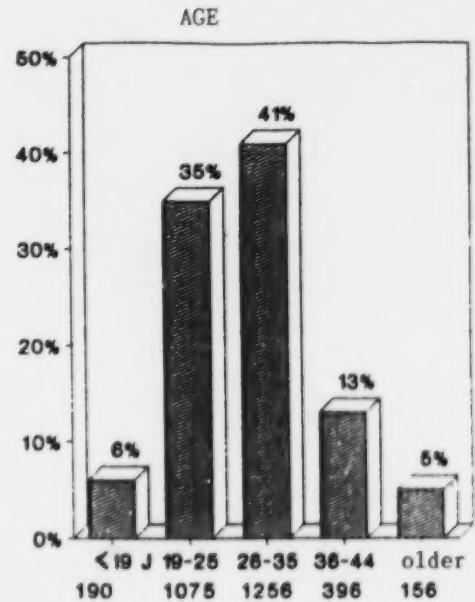
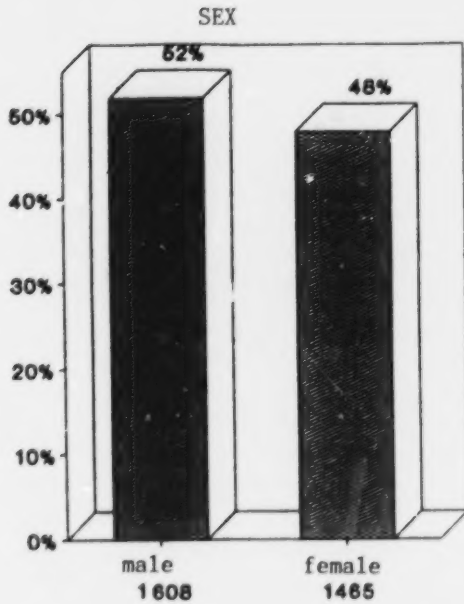
Understanding clients' life situations provides counsellors with both the background to the interpretation of the wish for counselling and a point of departure for the development of action- and decision-oriented interaction with the respective client. The counselling concept therefore involves interaction with clients to attempt to provide them active support in changing their life situations by acquiring knowledge, skills and/or action-oriented competences.

The CETCC has given counselling to approx. 3 500 clients in the form of one-to-one interviews since 1980. The number of queries answered over the telephone, brief information provided orally without a counselling interview and written replies to questions from participants in group counselling sessions is nevertheless much higher. The chart on the following page gives an overview of the structure of the CETCC's clients along socio-demographic lines.

Institutional counselling across the board, independent of the organizing bodies in question

If the CETCC is to be more than an uncritical publicity agent for the CET market by acting as a go-between for its CET schemes, CET counselling must not be limited to individual counselling sessions alone. Part of its self-perception must also be to contribute to the establishment of equal opportunities and the improvement

CLIENT STRUCTURE (1988)



HASA= lower secondary leaving certificate
 FOS = specialized upper secondary leaving certificate
 FHR/HR= certificate of aptitude for specialized short-course or full academic higher education

of educational and training infrastructures. With this target perspective in mind, it must collaborate actively to improve the CET infrastructure and initiate new target group-related CET provision in the interest of its clients.

Institutional counselling across the board, independent of the organizing body in question, implies above all cooperation with different CET establishments and other relevant institutions with the aim of innovation, in particular with respect to addressing target groups, target group-oriented provision planning and implementation; it also involves an opportunity of sharing experience and information.

Individual and institutional counselling are interdependent and must be interlinked so that conclusions gained from individual counselling interviews on clients' CET wishes and obstacles to CET participation and gaps in current local CET provision can be fed back to the appropriate bodies on the ground. The determined demand, i.e. ongoing analysis of the regional CET supply and demand situation - or to express this in more cautious terms, demand trends, without claiming to be representative - are funnelled as potentially innovative feedback into cooperation with the CET establishments.

In recent years the institutional counselling of the CETCC has concentrated on a number of key areas. Although responsibility for the various areas is divided among the four district counselling centres, activities are

nevertheless conducted by the four bodies from an overall municipal perspective. The CETCC has developed a considerable number of activities in the field of institutional counselling, a vital area for CET, and has initiated a series of CET schemes, a number of which are discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Moreover the CETCC has initiated the establishment of an association of all education/training and CET counselling centres in NRW within the framework of the Regional Convention of Municipal Authorities, thus creating an intermunicipal platform for the further development of educational/training counselling, exchange of experience and activities related to PR, counsellor development and pilot projects.

5. Long-term activities of the CETCC at regional level

Cooperation with CET establishments, authorities, counselling services, social agencies and other multipliers plays an essential role within the spectrum of the CETCC's tasks. CET counselling lies in the centre, between promotional activity for educational/training schemes, on the one hand, and programme development and cooperation with CET organizing bodies and other agencies, on the other.

Clients' needs and interests, as determined in the framework of CET counselling, may be fed back into CET planning by institutional counselling. By means of this form of cooperation, CET counselling can make a contribution to the improvement of the regional infrastructure and is thus an important factor of regional development.

In the following sections we shall go on to analyse four long-term work projects with reference to such cooperation structures and interpret their regional impact.

We shall first of all examine the point of departure of the respective cooperation project, and thereby the respective underlying demand, circumscribe the subject area and objectives and describe the interests of the participants.

A further focal point of research is the content of the

respective cooperation project and the specific forms of organization; these include development phases, decision-making channels, criteria for success and failure, PR work as the external presentation of the joint activities and participant recruitment, presentation of the various partners and the organization and the duration and extent of cooperation.

The extent to which participants cooperated as partners is examined on the basis of their working behaviour, relations, difficulties and conflicts; these include how the various cooperation participants reacted to arrangements made, competitive attitudes, different degrees of commitment, the influence of financial aspects and the importance of the respective establishments for the region.

The final section evaluates the various cooperation projects. Alongside an individual evaluation, methodological, content-related and organizational aspects are compared, their effects on the region estimated and infrastructural improvement examined. The duration of cooperation is related to its success and the question examined as to whether the cooperation project in question was unique in its kind or whether the concept was borrowed from another source and further developed. The project's significance in terms of educational/training policy will also play a role.

5.1 The CET conference

Cooperation background and development

In 1981 - prior to the decision of Cologne city council to prolong the work of the CETCC after the end of the pilot project - the idea emerged from the CET counselling arena to invite all the CET establishments in Cologne to a "CET conference", as a supplement to the "labour market conference" organized by the Lord Mayor. The aim of this conference was to reflect on the possibilities of improving the training and labour market opportunities of population groups with poor prospects of employment. In 1982 the unemployment rate stood at 9%; 70% of the jobless had received no vocational training. This apparently enormous and ambitious project of a relatively small-scale, still relatively unknown counselling centre must of course also be seen against the background of the need for PR-effective action in the light of the imminent city council decision on the continuation of the CETCC.

Content and organizational forms of cooperation

The CET conference was set the following tasks to achieve the above-mentioned objective:

- analysis of existing CET provision and determination of provision deficits
- reduction of provision surpluses and reshuffling of free capacity to bridge provision gaps

- a greater leaning of existing provision towards the learning capacity and life situation of the educationally and socially disadvantaged
- establishment of additional provision for the educationally and socially disadvantaged, in particular for the unemployed and workers threatened by unemployment.

The Lord Mayor, who agreed to act as patron of this conference on the "improvement of the skill structure of the unemployed and workers threatened by unemployment by continuing and continuing training schemes" invited all CET establishments making a contribution to combatting unemployment or wishing to do so to a preliminary meeting of all CET establishments in December 1981 for a briefing on the conference's aims, tasks and working procedures.

The work then continued in January 1982 in the context of various working parties with different specific subject areas:

Working party 1

Subject area	Schemes to motivate and prepare clients for CET participation
Composition	CET establishments or their specialized departments with primarily creative, person-, family- and leisure-oriented programmes;

political education institutions

Problem area Introduction of population groups unaccustomed to learning to CET. Apart from CET counselling, special measures to motivate this target group are necessary,

- promoting personality development,
- offering concrete life support,
- coping with the psycho-socio effects of unemployment,
- imparting basic cultural skills.

The working party set up two sub-groups, one to deal with the aims of educational work for the educationally disadvantaged and the other with the aims of educational work for ethnic minorities.

Working party 2

Subject area Second chance courses leading to school certificates and preliminary remedial courses

Composition Educational institutions, CET establishments or their specialized departments offering second chance courses leading to educational certificates and preliminary remedial courses

Problem area Second chance course provision does not cover demand. There is a deficit of provision both of day-time second chance courses leading to the compulsory school-leaving certificate and the technical/general baccalaureate and courses preparing for school attendance.

The discussion of the need for additional provision was supplemented by a debate on the content and didactic design of existing provision, costs and, to a certain extent, entrance requirements.

Working party 3

Subject area Second chance courses leading to vocational certificates and further vocational training schemes

Composition Chambers of industry, commerce and crafts, job centre, members of vocational training committees, continuing training institutions or their specialized departments primarily providing continuing vocational training.

Problem area Second chance schemes leading to the acquisition of vocational certificates and further training courses can make a

decisive contribution to upgrading the skill levels of both the jobless and those in employment. The working party examined the time aspects, content and organizational conditions of existing provision. The need for the establishment of new schemes was also discussed, e.g. preparatory schemes for retraining, second chance courses leading to vocational certificates, including courses running parallel to work (according to Sec. 40.2 Vocational Training Act), suitable for shift workers.

Following a number of full meetings, the working party divided into four sub-groups:

1. industry and technology
2. commerce and administration
3. health services, social and educative occupations
4. youth unemployment.

All the working parties met on a monthly basis until the summer recess of 1982, following which an interim report was drawn up with their results:

RESULTS OF THE WORKING PARTIES RELATING TO THE VARIOUS SUBJECT AREAS

"1. To improve opportunities of CET participation, an inventory of schemes relevant to the target groups in question has been drawn up to determine deficits in provision.

2. The CET conference has facilitated and promoted the exchange of information and experience and cooperation among the participating establishments.

The improvement of the target group-specific organization of CET provision requires the dismantling of contingencies, overlapping provision and unnecessary competition. To this end, organizing bodies are developing joint initiatives to take better advantage of existing capacities, to make joint use of workshops and technological facilities, to purposefully and effectively tap existing resources (e.g. job creation schemes), to achieve a better distribution of financial burdens and to formulate new target group-oriented training content.

CET provision must be organized as a coordinated system, each element building upon each other.

3. It has proved necessary to assure and expand preliminary remedial and preparatory courses in the field of continuing education and vocational training with the guidance of social workers.

4. Necessary additional schemes were indicated for all areas for the sub-target groups and initial steps undertaken to implement such provision. In particular it shall be necessary to ensure a better regional distribution of provision.

5. In the creation of new programmes, particular consideration should be given to linking general, school-based and vocational education (imparting key skills).

6. The socio-integrative function of CET for problem groups (e.g. the unemployed, ethnic minorities) should be accorded high priority in the expansion of the CET system.
7. CET institutions' activities related to addressing target groups and targeted PR work are being reinforced to reach an increasing number of those unaccustomed to learning to guide them towards CET schemes.
8. Comprehensive and effective CET counselling is indispensable if opportunities for the educationally disadvantaged are to be improved. The CETCC has proved its worth as a contact point and a broker between CET participants and providers.
9. The CET of the educationally disadvantaged can only be achieved if supported by the policymakers.
10. A majority of participants are in favour of continuing and institutionalizing the Cologne CET conference.
11. Improved coordination and an extension of statistical instruments to determine CET demand are being sought (data from the chambers, job centre, large-scale industry, educational administration, etc.)."

Acting as partners

The invitation from the Lord Mayor as the highest-ranking representative of the City of Cologne resulted in the participation of all the city's CET establishments. However participants were highly vexed to learn that the city authorities intended to improve the skill structure of the unemployed with their assistance without lending any financial support.

The heterogeneity of the CET establishments proved a problem. These establishments tended to keep a low profile and none of them really wanted to put their cards on the table. Sensitive points were increasingly touched upon and irritation expressed, e.g. by the chambers with reference to a critical discussion paper on continuing vocational training, drafted by the CETCC for a meeting of the working party "continuing vocational training".

Evaluation of cooperation

If a conclusion is to be drawn, it can be stated that despite the difficulties in the cooperation process, the results were nevertheless positive. First and foremost, the CET conference brought the CETCC's working area "institutional counselling" a step forward. In a short period of time, an intensive dialogue had been established with many CET establishments and a number of aspects raised by the working parties were later followed up without the organizational framework of the conference. It could therefore be stated that the CET conference paved the way for the working area of institutional counselling and a number of subsequent projects.

The AEC, subject to the provisions of CET development planning, and the CETCC agreed that the CET conference did not touch upon the statutory mission of CET development planning, as enshrined in the First CET Act for NRW, but in fact that the activities commenced at the CET conference could in many ways assist the activities of CET development planning (e.g. in inventory analysis). This

assessment is also reflected in the 1982-87 CET development plan of the City of Cologne, which describes the CET conference as a necessary complement to other planning instruments.

The Cologne experience shows that a continuing training conference, held sporadically every two or three years with different focal areas/subjects, can serve as a planning and control instrument for the regional CET arena.

5.2 The "literacy" project

Cooperation background and development

Adults with literacy deficits encounter a series of major problems in our society: they have virtually no job market prospects, they are excluded from parts of social, political and cultural life, they often have difficulty in coping with new media and technologies and are in general permanently restricted in their personal development. However illiteracy was a problem the public at large was unaware of until the late 1970s. The public debate on this question was only sparked off in the context of the deterioration of the labour market situation, in conjunction with reports in the mass media and literacy programmes in the UK and the Netherlands. The German UNESCO Institute has estimated the proportion of adults (partly despite participation in school-based education measures) with insufficient reading and writing skills to participate in social life as 0.75% - 3.75% of the total population of western Germany.

The CETCC also reacted to this problem. In 1980 the Centre began to take stock of the demand for corresponding educational programmes and at the same time evaluated similar experience of CET counselling centres in other municipalities. The situational analysis showed that only four such courses were offered in Cologne in 1980, on top of which very few people were aware of their existence. It transpired furthermore that clients who were the potential target group for these courses had enormous inhibitions about directly seeking such courses.

Faced with this situation, the CETCC launched a long-term initiative. It established contact with the course leaders of the current literacy programmes to intensify an exchange of information and support course participants. It moreover sought to establish cooperation with individual CET establishments to initiate further literacy programmes and cooperate in the field of participant counselling.

The objective of cooperation on the CETCC's side was to share experience, create a comprehensive form of provision, specifically catering for the target group, i.e. with decentralized implementation, to conduct PR work and break down prejudices. Once the interest in this field had been aroused among CET establishments, the latter expected that cooperation with the CETCC would offer them assistance in planning innovative schemes, support in the familiarization of course leaders and the referral of participants and the establishment of an ongoing exchange

of information among CET establishments, course leaders and counsellors.

Content and organizational forms of cooperation

In 1984 a library/documentation centre for the literacy field was established.

In 1985 the target group was extended and special courses were introduced for ethnic minorities, young people and the disabled. At the same time course provision was expanded to include extension and follow-up courses, e.g. in arithmetic, driving, German for beginners, geography, history and politics. In 1985 alone, 57 reading and writing courses were offered at 34 different course locations.

In 1985 a nine-month further training course for course leaders in the Cologne and surrounding area was organized and implemented in collaboration with the Pädagogische Arbeitsstelle des Deutschen Volkshochschulverbands (Educational Section of the Association of German Adult Education Centres - PAS). Moreover an event was organized to celebrate International Literacy Day, including a reception offered by the Lord Mayor of Cologne and an information fair in the City Hall.

1986 saw the elaboration and distribution of an information brochure entitled "Reading and Writing". The CETCC also participated in the planning and implementation of a specialized PAS conference on elementary education.

Moreover, in conjunction with the NRW Institute for Schools and CET and the PAS, a series of further training events were implemented in the form of weekend seminars for course leaders in the Cologne area.

In 1987 the CETCC participated in the media campaign of West German Radio in conjunction with the Association of NRW AECs with a special telephone hot-line.

Two work projects were carried out in 1988 - firstly the compilation and processing of teaching materials for use in adult literacy programmes and, secondly, the evaluation of further training events for course leaders involved in the Cologne cooperation model.

At the same, the basic education schemes were widely expanded by a spectrum of different types of extension and follow-up courses, e.g. including the subjects English and politics, the topics "getting around town", "dealing with authorities" and courses facilitating entry into preparatory programmes for second chance courses leading to the compulsory school-leaving certificate and transition into vocational schemes.

In parallel, new course forms were introduced: morning, afternoon/evening and intensive courses, educational/training release events and courses for shift workers.

1989 saw the launch of the work project entitled "Compilation of data on participation, course provision

and efficiency of literacy work in the Cologne area". The CETCC also participated in the national German coordination meeting in preparation of International Literacy Year of 1990.

In 1990 a week of action was carried out on the subject "Illiteracy - opportunities for counselling and assistance" at the Cologne job centre. The CETCC also collaborated in the planning, implementation and facilitation of a specialized national conference organized by the Adolf Grimme Institute on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Education and Science, entitled "People who can't write - what can be done?".

In the course of the cooperation activities it became clear that the initially chosen form of informal exchange of information was not commensurate with the complexity of the problems of this new area of CET which were, among others, as follows: the participating course leaders lacked sufficient knowledge of the detailed problems, specific learning history and the resulting learning behaviour of this target group; they had received no specific training in teaching illiterate adults; no specifically adult teaching material was available; the CETCC had no additional staff capacity to coordinate the many tasks and activities which had developed in the four years of literacy work; this included e.g. the planning and set-up of courses, inter-programme coordination, organizational questions of course design, participant recruitment, PR and management of educational and

content-related problems. As a consequence, an additional member of staff was recruited by the CETCC in the context of a job creation scheme in 1984.

In 1984 the first written agreement was signed between the CET establishments and the CETCC to render cooperation more effective and improve organization and the division of tasks; the signing of this agreement also gave cooperation a more binding character.

However certain concerns and reservations also emerged among the competing CET establishments with their different structures and aims. Coordination of a given work area across a number of organizing bodies had hitherto been far from customary practice. The most important aim from the point of view of the CETCC was that the autonomy of the establishments should not be called into question. This led to the establishment of the "cooperative management" body whose decisions have the character of recommendations for all participating bodies. The members of this cooperative management body were the decision-makers from 17 CET establishments, plus the CETCC. The binding character of cooperation was formulated in the express agreement "to liaise on all important aspects concerning literacy" (see p. 3 of the above-mentioned agreement).

Moreover two specialized working parties were established:

- the working party (WP) on pedagogy, to deal with

specialized questions relating to content and pedagogical matters and

- the working party on organization, finance and personnel, dealing with these subject areas.

Both WPs had the task of processing problems and drawing up draft decisions for the cooperative management body. Members of both WPs were to be full-time members of the pedagogical staff, course leaders or organizational and administrative experts of the CET establishments, delegated by the cooperative management body. The CETCC was given the function of the association "headquarters" and implemented decisions of the cooperative management body in this capacity. Its tasks included convening the bodies. It was decided that the cooperative management body should meet at least every three months, and the WPs approx. every four weeks.

The CETCC was involved in subject areas over and above the interests of the cooperative management body in the framework of its general tasks and in the field of literacy: e.g. it acted as the contact point for the media and politicians, cooperated with multipliers, especially in the administration, in particular schools, the Schools' psychological service and supra-regional authorities and agencies working in the literacy field. The CETCC organized regular course leader meetings to share experience, discuss specific technical problems and process individual cases (special problem situations of

individual course participants). Participation in these meetings was voluntary. An institutionally guaranteed participation of course leaders in the cooperation model bodies (cooperative management body, WP pedagogics) was not envisaged since this would have meant additional work for the course leaders, working exclusively on a fee basis. Although recognized as an educational policy problem, no additional funds were made available for this work.

In 1988, the work of the bodies was restructured due to difficulties in finding members for the two WPs. This was due to the fact that no full-time pedagogical, organizational or administrative staff were available for this area in the CET establishments and the course leaders were no longer prepared to take on additional unpaid work. It was therefore decided to suspend the work of the WPs and replace them by work projects on certain subjects to be completed by a given deadline; one decisive reason for this decision to restructure the work of the bodies was the intensive evaluation of a series of further training events along with with the cooperation model course leaders.

The participation of the course leaders in the work projects aims at drawing on the specialized competences of individual experienced course leaders, while at the same time keeping their work input as low as possible and offering them remuneration insofar as possible. Moreover the cooperative management body was also opened to course

leaders.

In 1991 the Cologne cooperation model had a total of 52 course leader members implementing 95 literacy, extension and follow-up courses in the Cologne area.

Acting as partners

Relations between the participating establishments were initially very wary, tense and cautious. The meetings were formal and very much concentrated on the subject areas on the agenda. An informal, relaxed exchange initially failed to emerge. Despite this, commitment to and interest in this new subject area for the new field of activity were relatively high. One decisive factor for participation in this project was nevertheless the fear or concern of being left out of a new development on the CET scene which could be "sold" well politically. This pioneering spirit and sense of commitment initially helped to bring together the two interest groups, the course leaders, on the one hand, and the full-time representatives of CET establishments, on the other, who often found themselves in diametrically opposed positions.

Conflicts between these two groups arose e.g. concerning

- the suspension of a course by the representatives of the CET establishments due to a lack of participants,
- the collection of the fees from course

participants, a task attributed to the respective course leader,

- remuneration of additional work affected by course leaders,
- conflicts within courses or with course participants with whom course leaders often found themselves in a position of solidarity against the representatives of the CET establishments.

This conflict of interests was particularly severe as long as the representatives of the CET establishments perceived themselves as keen competitors and were loath to let others look into the internal structure and decision-making processes of their institutions.

The conflict of interests was however also characterized by a series of minor misunderstandings. In particular, a misunderstanding arose among the course leaders, who felt that the CET office should represent their interests. The office however could only function as a neutral broker between the two groups.

Large-scale external events and other PR-effective measures such as exhibitions, publications, press articles, TV programmes, etc., often proved to be critical events, in particular if all the participants were not given an equal say or one institution or the CETCC office adopted too high a profile. These points tended to

rekindle latent feelings of competition. In contrast, if the participation of all those involved was ensured on an equal footing, these actions and their success brought the players closer together.

Situations in which an establishment assumed the main responsibility for the organization and implementation of a large-scale event with all the participants of the Cologne cooperation model on its premises proved to be particularly difficult since the organizer tended to feel it had not received adequate support from its partners.

Minor failures (e.g. few visitors to public events) made people ask whether there was any point in cooperation and whether it was worthwhile continuing. The participants fired criticism at each other. Over the years the course leaders - understandably - became less enthusiastic about taking on additional unpaid work (e.g. in the cooperation model bodies). Hardly anyone attended the course leader meetings. Course leaders became increasingly dissatisfied with the fact that despite years of intensive work, there had been absolutely no change in their working conditions, i.e. that they still had no permanent posts and were paid only very low fees, due to a lack of funding. Moreover the course leaders felt that they were no longer properly represented within the Cologne cooperation model. This was because the work of the two WPs had been suspended and only a handful of course leaders could be offered paid contracts for participation in long-term work projects. As a result, they asked for a body to represent their

interests, feeling that the communication channels via the office to the cooperative management body were inadequate, i.e. too indirect and protracted.

All this led to the request from the course leaders in 1987 for the right to participate and have their interests represented in the meetings and decision-making processes of the cooperative management body. Although the cooperative management body rejected a body representing the course leaders' interests along the lines of a body representing workers' rights, it nevertheless decided on a compromise that course leaders would in future be invited to the public sessions of the cooperative management body meetings in order to ensure a higher degree of exchange on questions related to specific specialized content and integrate the experience and competences of course leaders into the decision-making processes.

Unfortunately, little use is made by the course leaders of these cooperation and participation opportunities. Few of them attend the meetings. This however is not primarily due to dissatisfaction with the compromise solution, but is more a result of their persistently poor work situation which fails to provide remuneration for these additional activities.

Tensions between the interest groups have eased considerably, as shown, among others, by the fact that all recent meetings of the cooperative management body have been exclusively public, i.e. with no sessions behind

closed doors. Moreover, over the last two years a joint "pub evening" has been organized approximately every three months, permitting an informal exchange of information between representatives of CET establishments and course leaders in a relaxed atmosphere.

Following ten years of cooperation, the meetings of the cooperative management body take place in an informal, relaxed and familiar atmosphere.

Evaluation of cooperation

As the only cooperation association of this form in Germany, the cooperation model has triggered considerable interest, both in the Federal Republic of Germany and abroad, (cf. report of the Land Institute).

It should be noted that permanent associations of CET establishments involving a number of organizing bodies are still the exception to the rule in the Federal Republic of Germany. Concerns about autonomy, competition and work overload are the main reasons for the reluctance to cooperate in this field.

Experience shows that CET establishments, in particular small bodies, are often overstretched in implementing literacy courses which are very cost-intensive, involve a high-powered participant recruitment drive and require counselling and ongoing support for the participants, for which full-time pedagogical staff often have no time and public funds are becoming increasingly scarce. The CETCC's

coordinating activity has eased the burden on the CET establishments in terms of organization, personnel and content. The fact that the CETCC concentrated on the field of literacy permitted the compilation of comprehensive information and the development of opportunities for action. In contrast, the work in the context of the literacy efforts was generally only one field of the many tasks of the CET establishments. Since the CETCC itself is not a CET deliverer and is therefore neutral, it is in a particularly good position to promote cooperation processes.

The following positive experience of the cooperation model should also be emphasized: cooperation facilitates the extension and coordination of the entire course provision of a region in terms of quality, locational distribution and permeability. It thus permits a better utilization of resources in terms of funding, personnel and premises, among others by the joint funding and implementation of an intensive course programme or a further training course for course leaders, implemented by several establishments. It is the heterogeneity of establishment structures and, related to this, their different action opportunities which often make joint projects possible in the first place. Cooperation provides a new impetus for further development. However a cooperation model comes up against its limits as long as a substantial number of those involved in cooperation are not sufficiently "anchored" in this field of activity by permanent posts, whereby it should be emphasized that the CETCC has so far carried out

its coordinating activities in the context of a job creation scheme. This means that the necessary degree of continuity of the work is not guaranteed. A permanent post in the CETCC is necessary to permit long-term and effective cooperation and to ease the burden on the shoulders of the representatives of CET establishments.

So far no other institution has sought to take over the task of coordinating these long-term cooperation activities. This would only be possible if an additional post were created in the respective establishment. The participating cooperation partners have so far always been in favour of the CETCC continuing to act as coordinator. The Centre can offer neutral counselling, recruit participants and conduct multiplier work and is thereby an ideal complement to the potential of the CET establishments. If the CETCC were to withdraw at this point in time, the cooperation model would be unable to continue in its present form, in particular with the participation of small-scale establishments.

5.3 The "continuing education and training for women" project

Cooperation background and development

In the western part of the Federal Republic of Germany, almost one half of all employed women interrupt their careers for a family break. However, as a result of the change in women's life conditions and plans, an increasing number of this group aspires towards reentry into working life. Given the expected dearth of skilled workers in the wake of demographic developments, industry - especially in agglomerations like Cologne - has a growing interest in activating this group of women returners. Since career breaks lead to deskilling - in particular due to the rapid pace of technological change and changes in labour organization - and for various reasons it is sometimes impossible for these women to return to the occupation for which they were previously trained, special training provision is necessary for this group, not only imparting technical skills but also touching upon the reorganization of daily life. Since very few firms have so far offered programmes of this kind and by no means all women keep in close contact with their previous employers, organizing bodies outside the firms are called upon to implement such schemes.

Until 1984 there was no CET provision in Cologne or the Cologne area for women seeking a new orientation outside the family circle following a relatively long career break. A corresponding demand was determined by the CETCC

on the basis of individual counselling interviews; in the early 1980s, over 50% of counselling clients were women, including an increasing number of would-be women returners.

The counsellors frequently observed considerable inhibitions among these women in the counselling interviews. Whereas the initial external impression was one of self-confidence, a high degree of insecurity and a lack of self-confidence often emerged in the further course of the counselling interview. The women's behaviour was characterized by a major dilemma: on the one hand, they wanted to change their life situation, but on the other, they were afraid of embarking on the path leading to this goal. For example, for some of them picking up the telephone to call a potential employer proved to be a virtually insurmountable obstacle.

In the course of counselling, it became clear that information, counselling and motivation alone would not suffice to empower these women to reach a decision. Although the counsellors could indicate CET opportunities or strategies of action, they often observed - even in the counselling interview - that the women would not follow up the interview by action and that they had too many inhibitions - either real or imagined - which could not be overcome without more comprehensive assistance.

To improve provision in this field, the CETCC became active in the framework of its institutional counselling activities. The Centre felt that it was its task to arouse

a broad awareness for specifically women's problems in the context of the cooperation model and above all to promote the readiness of CET providers to devise corresponding provision.

Content and organizational forms of cooperation

The CETCC's many years of work in the specific field of "CET for women", against the background described above, at first sight encompasses a whole series of individual activities. These activities however are in the final analysis parts of an overall whole which developed in parallel or in succession and triggered results such as various CET programmes, changes in the general environment, information brochures and a scientific research study; the activities also partly led to measures which cannot be directly gauged, e.g. the stimulation of problem awareness among the staff of relevant CET establishments and other bodies, employers and politicians.

Following research to identify the existence of corresponding provision or curricula, the CETCC approached "the Association for CET for Women", an autonomous body in the Cologne district of Ehrenfeld. However initial difficulties arose in establishing cooperation since the CETCC's contact person was a man. For this reason the Ehrenfeld branch of the Cologne AEC was approached, which immediately expressed its keen interest.

In collaboration with the AEC, the equal opportunities unit, the Association for CET for Women and a Catholic

family education centre, the CETCC then drew up a course "blueprint" for women with families.

The aim of the course was to

- incite, support and promote the development of new personal and/or vocational (life) perspectives
- improve prospects of entry/reentry into working life.

Inspired by the Freiburg pilot project, "A new start at 35+", programme contents were above all to be developed in the field of psycho-social stabilization and guidance (self-experience and self-assertion, communication training, legal issues, learning and work techniques, job applications, information on the labour market, CET and retraining, questions related to physical work and health, company visits); an extremely pragmatic approach was adopted so that a corresponding project could be developed as soon as possible.

In the autumn of 1984 the "women's course programme" was implemented for the first time by the Ehrenfeld branch of the Cologne AEC in conjunction with the CETCC. Cooperation primarily involved participant recruitment, preliminary interviews with interested women, course leader selection, pastoral care for the women's course programme by a member of CETCC staff and scientific monitoring of content.

After the ball had thus started rolling, the CETCC

convinced other establishments in Cologne and the surrounding area to implement the course programme. Corresponding possibilities had often been considered in CET practice, but never actually implemented. By 1987, the aim of establishing a maximum, comprehensive provision of women's course programmes had been achieved.

A total of 33 women's course programmes were implemented by 8 CET establishments in the years 1984-1989. After a running-in phase in 1984/85, the number of course programmes implemented increased considerably in 1986 and 1987, followed by a phase of stagnation in 1988 and decline in the following year.

The "Women's course programme" association played a key role in developing the comprehensive course programme. The origins of this association can be traced back to a meeting of staff from the above-mentioned establishments to discuss the further curricular development of the women's course programme and PR work. Throughout 1985, an increasing number of members of staff from the various CET establishments were seeking information and an exchange of experience and the "Women's course programme" association was set up at the end of the same year under the coordination of the CETCC. Regular meetings were convened every two months. Over 20 meetings took place in the course of the following years, attended by staff members of 33 CET and other establishments, e.g. equal opportunities units and centres for the unemployed, not only from Cologne, but also from the districts of Erft,

Bergisch and Oberbergisch and the municipalities of Bonn, Leverkusen and Dormagen.

As an information pool, the association had the role of promoting cooperation between the various CET establishments and contributing to an increase in programme transparency.

Over the years, the Women's course programme association increasingly perceived itself as a forum concerned not only with the women's course programme and follow-up programmes, but, over and above this, as a body representing women in general at work and in CET. To make this clear to the outside world, it was renamed the "CET and career" association (WEIBER) in 1990.

If the women's course programme and the association are to be considered as the first step of or a platform for institutional counselling in the field of "CET for women", a host of activities ran in parallel and in the follow-up period aimed at improving the starting position of the non-homogenous target group of women in the phase of reorientation following a family-related career break.

The main activities in this context were as follows:

- Ongoing publicity and PR work for the women's course programmes of the various CET establishments were carried out by the CETCC in conjunction with the establishments, in particular in the form of

hand-outs, newspaper advertisements, press releases and press conferences. As a result, the radio and television authorities agreed to broadcast comprehensive reports on the women's course programme on various occasions.

- A further medium used to address the target group is the so-called "Cologne handbook for women", compiled in conjunction with CET establishments and other relevant bodies, providing information often raised in counselling interviews with an overview of general, school-based and vocational CET provision for women.

CET establishments were given the opportunity to introduce themselves and their programmes in the handbook, with particular emphasis on their women-only programmes. The handbook also includes information on important issues, e.g. social assistance and maternity leave. Institutions and associations offering counselling and assistance in various problem situations are also presented in the handbook.

Three editions of the handbook - a total of 30 000 copies - were published from 1988-1990 and ordered not only by women and institutions in the Cologne area, but also by authorities and other establishments nationwide.

- In order to publicize the aims and tasks of orientation courses for women following a family-related career break beyond the Cologne area, a full-day information event was organized on this subject for a large number of CET establishments and other relevant bodies from all parts of NRW upon the initiative of the CETCC in cooperation with the NRW Institute for Schools and CET in Soest. One result was e.g. the spontaneous creation of an association on this subject in the Münsterland region.

- Once the women's course programme had got off the ground, the CETCC, the equal opportunities unit and the association examined and discussed the possibility of setting up courses with a more vocationally-oriented learning as follow-up programmes. Following visits to projects in Frankfurt and Berlin, a seminar on business set-ups for women was planned. The Association for CET for women agreed to act as the organizing body. However applications for funding from the Land and central government were turned down due to the relatively high cost estimate for this pilot project and planned scientific monitoring (initially over DM 1 m, even when scaled down still as high as approx. DM 500 000).

- To be in a position to make proposals on structural improvement, it was very important for the CETCC to participate in relevant conferences and other

meetings at national level, e.g. a hearing organized by the SPD (Social Democrat) parliamentary group in the Bundestag. Information acquired in this context formed an important basis for the work of the Women's course programme association and in its talks with non-association CET establishments.

The talks with the Cologne job centre, initiated with the aim of raising awareness among job centre counsellors and to change the general conditions for further training and retraining schemes, reinforced the target perspective of the CETCC's activities.

Since it was impossible to cope with the wide spectrum of activities with only one permanent post, a number of colleagues financed through job creation schemes joined the CETCC team over the years. The marked decline in the women's course programmes observed in 1988 was, among others, linked to the fact that at the beginning of that year two posts funded through job creation schemes had expired, making the target group work necessary to support the CET establishments impossible.

However since there were many different opinions within the "Women's course programme" association on how activities should be continued, as to whether the objective had finally been achieved with the establishment of the women's course programme, and, if so what specific programme contents and

structures had made a particularly important contribution to this success and what difficulties and problem areas had there been, the idea of a scientific study emerged. This study, drawn up by the CETCC in the years 1989-91 - again funded through job creation schemes - was intended for the relevant CET and other establishments.

- CET provision for women returners has increased continually in recent years. More and more institutions and CET establishments have become active in this field. The unrelenting work of the CETCC has certainly made a contribution in this context. To create transparency for the potential beneficiaries of the measures, the information brochure "Returning to working life" was drawn up in collaboration with the Office for women's affairs in 1990. This brochure is a compilation of current guidance, skilling and retraining programmes tailor-made for the situation of women returners, e.g. part-time courses. The brochure, reprinted several times, met with a positive response among CET establishments and other institutions nationwide.

The CETCC also participates in various working parties:

- The WP on "work and career information seminars for single parents", convened in 1988, was concerned with the creation of part-time work and careers information seminars with child care facilities, in

collaboration with the job centre, the equal opportunities unit, the social welfare office, the youth welfare office and CET establishments. Several seminars of this kind were organized, but a number of interested women were unable to attend since it was not possible to organize child care facilities.

- The CETCC cooperates with the job centre, the chamber of trade and industry, the chamber of crafts, the Office for women's affairs and trade unions in the framework of the "Regional association for the promotion of training and employment opportunities for women", established in September 1990.

The first result of the work of this association was the organization of a telephone hotline entitled "Returning to work", sponsored by the local press and implemented by the job centre, the CETCC, the Office for women's affairs and the Association for the vocational promotion of women.

- The CETCC is a member of the Association on "education/training and CET counselling" of the Convention of Municipal Authorities of NRW. All the education/training and continuing training counselling centres in NRW are represented in this association with the aim of improving the CET counselling infrastructure and tackling specific problem areas together in the framework of working

groups with a specific mandate. The CETCC was also involved in the work of one of these working parties, "Educational/training counselling of the target group women and girls".

A basic paper was also drawn up on the subject "CET counselling for women, in particular women with families", made available to all the municipalities and districts represented in the Convention of Municipal Authorities via the "express service" of the German Convention of Municipal Authorities.

The work on this basic paper led to the idea of initiating a research subject on a "survey of women's latent and manifest wishes relating to CET", i.e. a scientific survey on the discrepancy between women's training needs and existing training provision as a means of finding aids for appropriate means of addressing the target group, solid institutional counselling, etc. The Interdisciplinary research group for women's research (IFF) of the University of Bielefeld established two two-year posts on the basis of job creation schemes to prepare the research project.

Considering the activities as a whole, it is evident that a network of regional cooperation relations has developed over the years, partly with the assistance of the equal opportunities unit - or the Office for women's affairs, as it is now called - with which the CETCC has collaborated

closely over the years.

Acting as partners

Apart from the above-mentioned difficulties with the "Association for CET for women" due to the "wrong gender" of the CETCC's contact partner, as well as the stubborn assumption of this autonomous organizing body, even in times of active cooperation, that the CETCC and the AEC, both being municipal bodies, were the one and the same thing. This misunderstanding, an obstacle to cooperation, was only ironed out after many rounds of talks. It meant that the CETCC's neutrality, and thereby its function as an independent broker, were called into question.

Following at least a year of successful cooperation with the Ehrenfeld branch of the AEC, the management of the AEC began to suspect that the CETCC was meddling in its affairs. The reason for this misunderstanding was the fact that the CETCC - in agreement with the Ehrenfeld AEC - had applied for a post under a job creation scheme to cover pastoral care for the AEC women's course programme (those responsible for pastoral care had previously been CETCC trainees).

A number of other conflicts arose with the AEC, especially over matters of competence.

Following initial teething problems, cooperation with the job centre improved continually over the years. In the early - but also the later - stage of cooperation, the job

centre was sometimes very sensitive in its reaction to certain comments and actions of the CETCC and on one occasion even threatened to lodge an official complaint.

There was a high degree of fluctuation among the participants in the "Women's course programme" association and changing faces were not conducive to cooperation. Many interested women only attended meetings once or twice to obtain general information, whereas others came more regularly over the longer term, seeking to share information and experience on practical problems encountered in the preparation and implementation of women's course programmes.

Reactions to cooperation within the association were accordingly ambivalent: three heads of section, active participants over many years, expressed their mixed feelings as follows:

"Sharing experience within the association was often ineffective since new women kept turning up, wanting information about course programmes. This meant that the same subjects cropped up again and again."

"The association was an important contact point for me to share experience. However at the meetings it was all too often an exchange of frustrated experience."

"Work in the women's programme association was very important for me. The incentive for the women's course programme came from the association and the mutual exchange and support were very important for me. However there was too much fluctuation. New faces kept turning up that I couldn't place."

Evaluation of cooperation

Following these years of cooperation with the CET establishments and other relevant institutions, it can be stated in summary that most of the players have been glad to accept the services of the CETCC which has become an important contact and cooperation partner over and above the association.

The CETCC has provided a considerable impetus to this field of institutional counselling and by its cooperation with CET establishments and other institutions has contributed to the improvement of the CET infrastructure and the appropriate design of CET measures for women.

Without additional staff or new prospects for posts within the framework of job creation schemes, the facilitating and coordinating tasks of the CETCC will no longer be able to be assumed to the same extent in the future. The CETCC nevertheless continues to assume responsibility for the regular publication of the updated information brochures.

5.4 The "new technologies" project

Cooperation background and development

The new technologies project comprises two sub-projects: the computer info week and the introductory course to information technology.

A. The computer info week

The introduction of "new technologies" both in the world of work and everyday life requires elementary and specialized EDP knowledge of an increasing number of population groups. In a context of rapid dissemination of information and communication technologies, training and continuing training provision in this field is accordingly diversified and has become increasingly widespread and untransparent in recent years.

Individual counselling at the CETCC pointed to a major lack of orientation and a considerable demand for specialized counselling to help clients decide on a continuing training programme suited to their specific needs, particularly in the EDP field; this applied both to participants without previous knowledge of EDP, as well as those familiar with this field interested in obtaining an additional vocational qualification.

This experience led the CETCC to initiate the computer info week, in collaboration with the Cologne job centre, the Cologne AEC and public and private training deliverers.

The aim of the computer info week is:

- to contribute to improving education and information on training and further training opportunities in the EDP field,
- to present the wide spectrum of EDP training provision in Cologne in a clear and transparent manner,
- to offer direct information and specialized counselling and
- to facilitate access to the new technologies for a broad spectrum of society.

The computer info week is addressed to all groups of society interested in obtaining information on their individual training and continuing training opportunities in the EDP field.

Content and organizational forms of cooperation

Cooperation between the CETCC (Nippes branch) and CET establishments whose EDP training provision was listed in a CETCC brochure, led to the idea of organizing an information fair on training and further training provision in the field of information and communication technologies in Cologne.

To implement this idea, the CETCC discussed an initial

project draft and drew up a joint strategy with private and public CET establishments providing EDP courses/seminars in Cologne.

The Cologne job centre and AEC joined the CETCC as organizers of the computer info week.

The CETCC was responsible for both overall coordination and the planning and implementation of PR work and publicity, including financial planning and management of the latter. The private CET establishments made financial contributions for publicity purposes, invoiced through the CETCC. In the light of the weak financial capacity of public training deliverers recognized under the CET Act, the private establishments agreed that a waiver be granted to the public organizing bodies.

The job centre provides the exhibition area in the career's information centre free of charge and is responsible for organization on the ground. It also sends speakers to the fringe programme, funded and organized by the AEC, which provides information in the form of lectures, browsing areas and films on various themes related to new technologies.

As co-organizers, the CET establishments present their EDP training courses and offer individual information and counselling opportunities. Since the computer info week aims at publicizing and providing information on training opportunities, the cooperation partners agreed to exclude

product advertising, i.e. no software or hardware manufacturers are represented at the fair.

The first computer info week with 24 participating CET establishments was held in November 1987. Since then this event has been repeated annually. Throughout the three-day event (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) the CETCC regularly conducts a visitors' survey to gain an indication of the publicity effect of the various forms used to address the visitors, visitor structure and evaluation. The results of the visitors' survey are plugged into the planning of the following year's event. A joint evaluation meeting to share experience, raise criticism and discuss future procedures is held after each computer week. Documentation is elaborated with a summary of the results and a press review to evaluate each event.

Thanks to the various years of experience in the planning and implementation of computer info weeks and the high acceptance of the CETCC as a coordinating unit, the number of the preparatory meetings has fallen from year to year.

Attendance at the first computer info week was moderate (approx. 1 000) - an unsatisfactory result for all those concerned. Evaluation showed that the low numbers of visitors was closely linked to the publicity input. Since the advertising budget for the first computer week was exclusively funded by the City of Cologne - with no financial participation from the organizing bodies - a widespread publicity campaign had not been possible.

For recent computer info weeks, approx. DM 40 000 were spent on publicity and PR alone. Widespread, intensive publicity measures have generated a correspondingly high number of visitors, increasing constantly from year to year since the second computer info week to reach 4 000 visitors at last year's event.

A visitors' survey conducted by the CETCC showed that 95% of the surveyed persons considered the computer info week interesting or very interesting. The visitor structure shows that the aim of addressing a wide section of the population has been achieved.

For example, of the visitors to the third computer info week, 54% were in gainful employment, 3% self-employed, 2% trainees and 41% non-employed (of whom 14% were students, 10% schoolchildren, 9% unemployed, 6% housewives and 2% participants in retraining programmes).

Acting as partners

Transparency and co-determination in all questions relating to the planning and organization of the computer weeks were necessary as a basis for relations of confidence. As an independent institution, the CETCC had to win the acceptance and confidence of its cooperation partners.

Since most of the representatives of the various institutions did not know each other when they met as potential competitors at the first meeting, they were

initially accordingly reserved. The discussion and decision-making process was initially protracted and lacking in frankness, the participants wanting to keep their distance with the attitude "I'm not going to give anything away for the time being".

The CETCC was regarded critically as a negotiating partner. However, cooperation gradually became frank and dynamic. Discussion in the preparatory meetings got under way more quickly, people adopted clear-cut positions and the participants' exchange of views intensified. The preparatory meetings for recent events have been characterized by rapid, constructive decision-making processes.

There has also been an evident change in relations among the players during the computer info weeks. The proximity of the exhibition stands fosters contacts between neighbours and discussions as partners and on technical matters. A lively exchange of information now takes place at the events and the readiness to exchange views on course provision goes beyond the computer info week. The CET establishments assess the opportunity of establishing personal contacts in this framework particularly positively.

Evaluation of cooperation experience

The main success of the computer week is that it has created a form of cooperation between CET establishments, the job centre, the AEC and the CETCC unique in the

pluralistic CET arena. The computer info week, at the opening of which leading members of the NRW government, the NRW job centre and the City of Cologne authorities have taken the floor, is a new technologies information event unique not only to the Cologne area, but to the entire Land of NRW.

Intensive cooperation in this project has developed very close, solid relations among the CET establishments and between these establishments and the CETCC. As a result, the CET establishments now approach the CETCC on their own initiative, either to seek or pass on information, more frequently than before.

Contacts with the cooperation partners were also used in the initiation of the introductory course to information technology project.

B. Introductory course to information technology

Cooperation background and development

Information and communication technologies are increasingly entering all walks of human life. The rapid development of "new technologies" has led to a schism between computer literates and illiterates.

The Cologne area offers a very sound, varied spectrum of continuing vocational training courses in the EDP field. However for various reasons the general EDP introductory courses do not reach many groups of the population. For

this reason, it was considered necessary to establish target group-specific provision as an introduction to the "computer world". This provision was to build bridges in order to offer as many interested adults as possible an opportunity of participating in a introductory course to information technology (ICIT), the introductory events being regarded and designed as an orientation phase.

Building on the ICIT, further coordinated extension courses were to be offered (e.g. the "AEC PC course", run by the association of North-Rhine-Westphalian AECs, the "AEC certificate in computer science", awarded by the Cologne AEC).

The experience of the CETCC indicated both a deficit of corresponding target group-specific CET provision and a lack of minimum standards for learning objectives/content/forms for ICIT courses.

The CETCC therefore developed ideas and a basic concept for the extension of ICIT provision in the Cologne area.

Contents and organizational forms of cooperation

The CETCC discussed this basic strategy with the CET establishments with a view to cooperation in this specific field of CET. Cooperation among ICIT organizing bodies provides a forum of discussion promoting an exchange of experience and information. Cooperation is to have a support function for CET establishments, facilitating the design of target group-specific ICIT provision and

initiating and expanding programmes on an individual basis.

In order to develop varied and differentiated overall provision, it was necessary to contribute to improving and expanding the existing provision structure in the Cologne area. As far as content design is concerned, minimal standards for learning targets, contents and forms were to be sought.

As far as the ICIT's learning objectives are concerned, as well as imparting basic theoretical and practical EDP skills, it also involves non-functional aspects, e.g. "demythifying" technology and imparting action- and design-related competences in all walks of life.

Participants are thus to be empowered to plan and decide on CET provision themselves.

The partners of this cooperation model were CET establishments from the Cologne area providing EDP courses. These included four organizing bodies (Cologne and Bergisch-Gladbach AECs, the Centre for social education activities, the Sülz-Klettenberg neighbourhood centre) which already had target group-oriented provision included in their programmes, and were involved, among others, in questions relating to the methodology, and didactics of imparting EDP skills.

Contact was also established with institutions, e.g. the Association for the promotion of pedagogics in information

technologies (VPPI), the Society for communication and data processing (KODA) and the audiovisual media centre of the University of Cologne.

Two bodies were responsible for organizational matters and the distribution of tasks: the Association of ICIT organizing bodies and its working parties, responsible for the elaboration of documents on given subjects.

The CETCC acted as a type of "headquarters" for the Association of ICIT organizing bodies and the working parties. Its services, initially provided on a temporary basis in the framework of a two-year job creation scheme, covered the organization and coordination of all the activities, support in the target group-specific design of CET provision in the ICIT field, PR and participant recruitment.

The venues for the meetings of the Association of ICIT organizing bodies and the working parties were rotated to give the various participating organizing bodies an opportunity to get to know each other "on the spot".

The following subjects were of relevance for the meetings of the Association of ICIT organizing bodies:

- analysis of target group-specific ICIT provision in the Cologne area,
- PR and participant recruitment,
- learning targets and content,

- development of quality standards and
- the publication of a brochure listing all the target group-specific ICIT programmes in the Cologne area.

As far as the establishment of working parties was concerned, the CETCC proposed the following three key subject areas for discussion. Working party I was to deal with the subject areas "target groups/PR/participant recruitment", working party II with "learning targets/contents" and working party III "concepts of methodology and didactics/forms of learning". It was decided to set up working party III "concepts of methodology and didactics/forms of learning" first. The establishment of the two other working parties was differed to a later date.

Working party III discussed the subject areas didactics and methodology of information dissemination, the introduction and use of learning programmes and professional development for lecturers in information dissemination.

One result of the Association of ICIT organizing bodies was the publication of the brochure "EDP introductory and extension courses" in the Cologne area, drawn up by the CETCC in liaison and cooperation with the individual providers.

In conjunction with the formulated objectives, the development of joint quality standards for EDP

introductory courses was an important point of discussion. It was originally intended to include the formulated quality standards in the "EDP introductory and extension courses" brochure as a type of "recommended catalogue", but the elaboration and implementation of quality standards proved impossible due to time constraints.

Didactics and methodology of information dissemination in conjunction with professional development for lecturers were key themes of the working party on "concepts of methodology and didactics/forms of learning". The group planned to develop joint financial strategies (public funding, subsidies, etc.) for the further training of lecturers and organize a professional development seminar unit for lecturers in the introduction-to-EDP field. However since working party III was disbanded at the end of the relevant job creation scheme, this idea no longer materialized.

Acting as partners

Most of the participating establishments had become acquainted from their cooperation in the context of the computer info week and thus collaborated as partners from the very beginning. The representatives of the various institutions showed considerable commitment to and interest in this working area. From the very outset, the cooperation meetings took place in an open atmosphere and relations were not unduly impeded by competitive attitudes.

The participants' readiness to get to know each other was

demonstrated by the proposal of the CET establishments to rotate the venue of the meetings to obtain a better overview of the work of the various organizing bodies. A very personal and relaxed exchange of experience was established, in particular in working party "concepts of methodology and didactics/forms of learning".

The course of discussion and the decision-making process in the preparatory meetings was very much target-oriented and focused on technical matters.

As a result of the positive results of cooperation within the context of the computer info week, the CETCC was generally accepted from the very outset and soon gained the confidence of the various players in its function as the "coordinating headquarters" of the Association of ICIT organizing bodies.

Evaluation of cooperation

The idea of the Association of ICIT organizing bodies met with keen interest among the participating institutions and was initiated for the first time in Cologne for this specific field of CET. The organizing bodies were also highly committed to supporting and continuing cooperation in this form.

In particular with respect to the development of learning content and objectives, a permanent association of organizing bodies could have created an important basis for agreement on joint standards for target group-specific

EDP provision in Cologne.

It must be stressed that the CETCC's coordinating activities involve a considerable amount of work which cannot be guaranteed without further staff resources. With respect to the content-related requirements for the ICIT field, an additional member of staff is necessary to maintain relations with the organizing bodies and to guarantee the continuity of activities.

5.5 The "educational/training leave" project

Cooperation background and development

The starting point for the activities of the CETCC in the field of educational/training leave was the adoption of the NRW CET for Workers Act in NRW (NRW), which came into effect on 1 January 1985. Although the adoption of the Act made NRW the sixth German Land to introduce educational/training leave, it nevertheless represented a new area of CET and new organizational forms for NRW CET deliverers.

The Education/Training Leave Act provides for five annual days leave from work at full pay for the purposes of vocational/political CET to enable workers to keep abreast of the fundamental changes in the world of work and society. The aim of the act is to reach above all those who previously found it difficult to participate in CET schemes on account of their special working and life conditions (e.g. shift workers).

Long before the adoption of the Act, the CETCC recognized this future field of CET as an important area of cooperation with CET establishments and planned cooperation along the lines of the "Literacy for adults" cooperation model.

As a first step, the CETCC participated in seminars organized by the NRW Institute for Schools and CET on the subject of educational/training leave. In this context initial contacts were established with representatives of various CET establishments from all over NRW. The CETCC first of all offered the CET establishments cooperation in the field of participant recruitment.

Contents and organizational forms of cooperation

In 1984 the CETCC drew up the information brochure on the Educational/Training Leave Act, entitled "Educational/training leave: a new opportunity", primarily designed for the population at large, but also targeted towards multipliers and CET establishments. This information brochure was widely disseminated by the CETCC: to works and staff councils, personnel administrators, multipliers in counselling centres, community centres, hostels/residences, job centres, social welfare offices and other social services.

Firms and works councils were pinpointed as not only the most important but also the most difficult multipliers, often sceptical of such measures. Many employers regarded the act as inadmissible meddling into company policy since

they were now forced by law to offer their workers fully paid leave.

The result was an increasing demand for the new type of CET provision. The CETCC reacted by drawing up a list of approx. 50 educational/training leave seminars in the Cologne area and further afield in 1985 (Neue Chance: Bildungsurlaub, Info Nr. 1). This field of CET is specific in that its special organizational form suggests itself to the attendance of CET courses away from one's place of residence or work. Events outside Cologne offering compact seminars and the opportunity of spending the night away from home are of particular appeal to people living in the city. Moreover, Cologne deliverers even often organize their seminars outside the city to bring participants out of their daily routine and provide learning in a new environment. Against this background, cooperation with the CET establishments extended beyond the Cologne region from the very outset. In this initial phase, the main thrust of cooperation was the service provided by the CETCC in recruiting the participants for the CET establishments' events. Regular information events on educational/training leave were organized in conjunction with the Cologne AEC.

The objective was to inform those seeking advice and multipliers both of the statutory provisions of the Education/Training Leave Act and educational leave provision via broadly-based PR work (the "Educational/training leave: a new opportunity" information brochure and synoptic lists of schemes) and in

particular to motivate the educationally disadvantaged to participate in educational/training leave events.

The "educational/training leave in Cologne" action comprised an information week involving many different forms of PR and promotional activities to point to special educational/training leave schemes to be held at a later date. Ten CET establishments in Cologne offered special educational/training leave seminars for the educationally and socially disadvantaged throughout the week.

The "educational/training leave in Cologne" action was described in a comprehensive documentation report to motivate CET establishments to provide corresponding educational/training provision.

In 1985 the Wuppertal educational/training counselling centre participated for the first time in the mailing of the information brochure "Educational/training leave: a new opportunity" and assumed its share of the printing costs. This marked the beginning of increasingly close cooperation between the two educational/training counselling centres, further intensified by the joint publication of the brochure "Educational/training leave provision in NRW in the first half 1986", listing approx. 300 schemes. The brochure "Educational/training leave provision in NRW - September 1991 - February 1992" listed some 1 500 schemes. The reasons for cooperation between the counselling centres were as follows:

- cost-sharing
- division of the increased work input as a result of the higher numbers of brochures and extended provision.

The demand for this brochure was so high that financial support from the NRW Institute for Schools and CET was necessary for its later editions. The Institute, and later the NRW Ministry of Education, continually co-fund the elaboration and the operating, distribution and printing costs of the brochure, published at six-monthly intervals.

Upon the initiative of the CETCC and with the support of the Wuppertal CET counselling centre, the "Educational/training leave working party of NRW" was set up at the end of 1985. The aims of this WP were the exchange and dissemination of the experience of educational/training leave providers, CET counsellors and continuing trainers involved in the field of educational/training leave in NRW, joint PR activities, precise analysis of demand, the initiation of educational/training leave seminars and intensification of cooperation between members. The WP worked on a voluntary basis under its own responsibility. Its 16 members represented the following: the NRW Institute for Schools and CET, representatives of various CET establishments sponsored by voluntary associations or public authorities, representatives of NRW CET organizations and CET counselling centres.

The WP expanded its activities in 1986. As a result of considerable legal uncertainty and the increasing demand for detailed legal information from multipliers, e.g. members of works and staff councils, personnel departments, representatives of social services, as well as from CET establishments, it became necessary to overhaul the legal bases for these groups. Due to the complexity of this subject area and for reasons of efficiency, a sub-group was formed with the exclusive mandate of dealing with these legal issues. This sub-group soon drew up the "Guidelines on the CET for Workers Act" to improve information on educational/training leave, to facilitate exchange of experience between representatives of CET establishments by means of practice-related reports and to provide motivation for the provision of educational/training leave seminars. The coordination and management of these two working parties were assumed by the CETCC, which convened the meetings of the full WP, (approx. every four-six weeks) and the sub-WP (as required) and implemented the decisions on PR activities.

At the end of 1986, the CET counselling centres of Düsseldorf and Gütersloh agreed to join the "Educational/training leave WP of NRW" and henceforth participated in the elaboration and mailing of the "Educational/training leave provision in NRW" brochure, first published in the first half of 1987 with a joint imprint. In 1987 it included some 700 seminar programmes. As a result of the continual expansion of provision, it was decided to computerize the compilation of the

brochure. Since the Wuppertal educational/training counselling centre had corresponding technical facilities, coordination of the compilation of the brochure, and thereby coordination of the "Educational/training leave WP of NRW", was transferred to this centre in 1987. The CETCC continued to manage the financial aspects of the "Educational/training leave provision in NRW" brochures, organizing and monitoring the printing procedures.

Cooperation among the four CET counselling centres in the "Educational/training leave WP of NRW" also marked the beginning of more comprehensive cooperation among all CET counselling centres in NRW and their amalgamation into a working party within the context of the Convention of German Municipal Authorities. Upon the initiative of the CETCC, the "Educational/training and CET counselling" working party was set up within the context of the Convention of NRW Municipal Authorities to meet the growing societal and labour market policy significance of education/training and CET with increased cooperation in the field of educational/training counselling. This development paved the way for an exchange of experience and the implementation of joint work projects with educational/training counselling centres all over Germany.

In 1987 an information event and a press conference were held on the CET for Workers Act at the Cologne AEC, attended by representatives of the Ministry of Education, the President of the Administrative District, Land organizations, CET establishments and education/training

counselling centres and members of the "Educational/training leave WP of NRW".

In 1988, evaluation of the activities of the "Educational/training leave WP of NRW" showed that the promotional activities of the education/training counselling centres had made a substantial contribution to facilitating the organization of educational/training leave seminars and reaching an increasing number of the educationally disadvantaged.

At the beginning of 1988, the "Educational/training leave WP of NRW" recognized the need for its greater involvement in questions relating to pedagogical content and the methodology of the implementation of educational/training leave seminars. The NRW Institute for Schools and CET picked up this idea and has been implementing the so-called "information talks on educational/training leave" every six months since then.

In 1991, the NRW Institute took over coordination of the "Guidelines on the CET for Workers Act" sub-group. As well as further cooperation within this group, the CETCC has assumed the financial management and printing of this brochure in conjunction with the NRW Institute.

In 1989 the CETCC began with the establishment of a Cologne educational/training leave cooperation network in the framework of a job creation scheme. Upon its initiative, the Cologne educational/training leave working

party, with the CETCC as coordinator, was set up in 1990. This working party includes representatives of 15 Cologne voluntary and public CET establishments with the aim of sharing information and experience on corresponding schemes in the Cologne area, analysing educational/training leave seminars in Cologne, initiating new provision for the Cologne area, especially for the educationally disadvantaged, developing concepts for the contents of such provision, professionalizing the targeting of participants and PR and implementing joint projects. The working party meets approx. every two months, convened by the CETCC. Ad hoc sub-groups, open to any interested member of the working party on a voluntary basis, are set up to examine issues of topical interest. Cooperation in the full working party is also voluntary. The binding character of its work stems from an agreement on a joint concept ("basic concepts of the Cologne working party on educational/training leave").

Acting as partners

Some works and staff councils were initially sceptical of educational/training leave provision. As the legal situation became more transparent (positive confirmation of the CET for Workers Act by the Federal Constitutional Court, agreement on the application of the Act in company practice between both sides of industry), cooperation with works and staff councils improved. In fact, many works councils now contact the CETCC upon their own initiative to obtain information on the current legal situation and distribute the educational/training leave brochures in

their companies or offices. Many large Cologne companies regularly distribute large batches of the educational/training leave brochure.

Work in all the Land working parties has targeted and focused on technical aspects. Participation in the meetings has constantly remained high. An important aspect for the keen interest in cooperation was the initially high degree of uncertainty in the field of educational/training leave as a new dimension of CET (e.g. legal issues, implementing provisions, funding of educational/training leave seminars). Moreover, the initial widespread scepticism of employers (who filed a constitutional appeal against the CET for Workers Act to the Federal Constitutional Court, which however was rejected) promoted a feeling of solidarity among CET deliverers. Many people interested in educational/training leave who had registered for a corresponding seminar at one of the CET establishments were surprised to have their application for educational/training leave rejected by their employers or asked to obtain additional information from the CET establishments on their courses. This uncertainty was spilled over to the CET establishments.

The working atmosphere in the WP has been friendly, informal and relaxed from the very beginning, largely due to the fact that one key aspect of the participants' joint activities is PR, in the framework of which all the players can present themselves and gain numerous participants for their educational/training leave

seminars. The considerable success of the brochures, demand for which can barely be covered, has brought the WP members closer together and given them a new impetus for their joint activities.

The support of this work by the NRW Institute for Schools and CET, the contact partner for all CET establishments in NRW which often issues guidelines on developments in the CET field, has also played a very important role in this context; the Institute has frequently referred to cooperation in the various WPs in its publications.

Structural difficulties resulted from the fact that the cooperation network covered the entire Land of NRW from the very outset - since the CET for Workers Act applied all over NRW - and the coordinating function was in the hands of a municipal counselling centre. It therefore made sense for tasks from this area to be transferred to the NRW Institute at a later date.

Cooperation in the Cologne Educational/training leave WP was characterized by confidence and frankness from the very beginning. The following aspects facilitated this atmosphere:

- the success of the NRW WPs and
- the rapid planning and implementation (at the second meeting of the Cologne WP) of a work project "educational/training leave in Cologne action", made possible by a DM 12 000 subsidy from the NRW Ministry

of Education.

Evaluation of cooperation

The manifold forms of cooperation in the field of educational/training leave have been perceived and presented as extremely successful and a model of good practice by both the participating institutions and superordinate establishments (President of the Administrative District, NRW Minister of Education).

The positive results are thanks to extremely intensive cooperation which would not have been possible without the initiating, coordinating and facilitating function of the CETCC.

Cooperation has in particular contributed to an improvement of the structure of educational/training leave provision, content and design, in particular for target groups in the Cologne area, for whom CET schemes for employees is an important door to vocational skilling. Cooperation activities have also had an extremely positive effect on employers' understanding of and interest in CET schemes for their employees.

The considerable workload cooperation in the various establishments involves for the CETCC, means that these activities can only be continued in the future if additional posts are created - at least of a temporary nature in the framework of job creation schemes.

6. Evaluation of cooperation and its regional implications

6.1 Cooperation targets, contents and results

In the framework of all the projects discussed in this report:

- literacy
- continuing training for women
- new technologies and educational/training leave,

it has been both possible and necessary for the CETCC to become active in its day-to-day work in the field of individual counselling, sharing experience with CET organizing bodies and against the background of changes in educational/training policy - e.g. the adoption of the CET for Workers Act. The task profile of the independent CETCC, which operates decentrally in four Cologne districts, encompasses:

- addressing target groups, PR and CET promotional measures
- (individual and group) counselling
- determination of needs
- institutional counselling/cooperation with CET establishments and other relevant institutions.

Among other labour market problem groups, the CETCC's main target group are the socially and educationally

disadvantaged.

One of the CETCC's tasks is to identify deficits in the CET field and guarantee the further development of the regional CET arena. The CETCC made the following observations:

- a lack of educational/training schemes for certain target groups or new subject areas (e.g. functional illiterates, women returners and new technologies),
- existing provision lacked transparency for the population at large,
- new legislation (CET for Workers Act) rendered assistance for both workers and CET providers necessary.

The 1981 CET conference (see chapter 5.1) provided a decisive impetus for the burgeoning cooperation projects. Although the then fledgling CETCC pilot project did not succeed in establishing permanent cross-institutional cooperation among all municipal CET establishments, this conference and the subsequent working party meetings nevertheless provided the counselling centre with an opportunity to establish deeper contacts with the various CET establishments in the region. This basis greatly facilitated the initiation of the projects discussed above in the coming years.

The topics raised in the CETCC's individual counselling interviews - especially among those unaccustomed to

learning - were very often related to areas upstream of continuing vocational training: long routes and a considerable time input were necessary to lead the unemployed and those unaccustomed to learning towards vocational education and training, to stabilize their career development opportunities, paving the way for subsequently labour market integration.

As an agency independent of the organizing bodies, recognized by CET agencies as neutral, the decentralized CETCC initiated or developed key subject work areas with differently weighted subject areas and target groups. The aims of the cooperation projects were coordinated to target the following aspects in this context:

- feed-back of results obtained from individual counselling interviews on CET needs to CET establishments
- initiation of new CET provision
- improvement and extension of existing and initiation of new target group-specific CET schemes
- joint utilization of scarce financial resources
- motivation of new target groups (e.g. functional illiterates) for participation in continuing training
- awareness-raising among CET organizing bodies/ establishments, specialized circles and the public in general for new problem areas in the CET sector
- improvement of the labour market opportunities of the relevant target groups
- neutral assistance in planning schemes

- selection and induction of course leaders.

The main thrust of work in the cooperation bodies involved the following fields:

- sharing experience on given subjects, especially determination of needs
- PR
- planning of CET measures on the heterogeneous market
- further training of course leaders.

As a result, the main following activities emerged:

- The literacy project initially chiefly involved mutual assistance in planning and implementing new educational/training schemes, selection and induction of course leaders, participant recruitment, the elaboration of appropriate teaching materials for adults and exchange of experience.
- The CET for women project focused on raising awareness among CET organizing bodies/establishments, policymakers and employers of specific women's problems and the initiation and development of guidance schemes for women during and following a career break.
- The new technologies project in particular created an opportunity for CET providers to confront a new provision structure and a new field and to plan the

possibility of joint promotional activities under the neutral coordination umbrella of the CETCC, despite competition on the CET market.

- The educational/training leave project concerned the new scope for CET establishments as a result of new legislation. In this case uncertainty with respect to the interpretation of the legislation was an important motive for cooperation. Cooperation also offered an opportunity to reduce costs for the necessary additional publications and promotional activities.

It is evident that information and PR were a focal aspect of cooperation across all the projects, along with a high motivating effect for the cooperation partners, among others. These activities permitted the players to present themselves to the outside world, served the purpose of promoting both themselves and educational/training schemes and helped address the appropriate target groups. Although these are the tasks and target perspectives of any CET establishment, they may be both intensified and strengthened in a framework of cooperation.

All the projects led to the compilation of information brochures and the organization of information fairs/events. Posters and advertisements, specialized conference and media campaigns (literacy) were of similar importance. The CETCC was responsible for PR in each case. It initiated, coordinated and attempted to iron out

difficulties and sensitivities to achieve a differentiated form of PR and establish continuity of cooperation.

Decisive elements for the establishment of cooperation projects were, on the one hand, the observed need to initiate the projects and, on the other, the fact that all the fields covered required broadly-based coordination and cooperation: neither the CETCC nor an individual CET organizing body could have accomplished the triggered changes alone for the following reasons, weighted differently for the various projects:

- inadequate personnel capacity
- insufficient funding
- inadequate specialized competence in the respective new CET field developed in the CETCC, e.g. from its work with clients and exchange of experience with other establishments
- competitive attitudes
- restriction of scope
- a lack of acceptance due to competitive thinking.

6.2 Organizational forms and experience in cooperation

The CET conference took place in December 1981 and the projects discussed in this report were launched on different dates. The first project was the literacy project, started in 1981; the other projects began between 1984 and 1987. A number of projects were faced with problems concerning their continuation, above all due to

insufficient staffing, e.g. because jobs in the framework of job creation schemes had been suspended. Cooperation in the individual projects largely continues and the players wish it to pursue this cooperation.

The main partners of the CETCC were Cologne CET establishments, as well as authorities such as the job centre, the equal opportunities unit, other counselling centres and institutions at Land level. In some cases, cooperation extended beyond the Cologne regions to other municipalities, in a number of cases to Land and federal institutions.

The cooperation partners involved in the various projects were above all interested in:

- an (ongoing) exchange of information and experience on the theme of the individual project,
- mutual assistance and utilization of various competences,
- participant recruitment and PR,
- settlement of funding issues and
- development of new ideas.

The organizational form and functioning of all the projects show similarities. Coordination and in some cases the management of the cooperation bodies largely lay in the hands of the CETCC staff, while at the same time the autonomy of the CET establishments was respected. Cooperation in the cooperation bodies can be characterized

as "bindingly unbinding" since the cooperation structures were not characterized by rigid rules, but largely steered without the tasks, competences and working procedures being laid down in black and white. With an awareness of joint objectives and purposes, an understanding was reached on these aims and the ways and means of achieving them; jointly taken decisions served as recommendations for all those concerned.

As a function of efficiency or working capacity, tasks or partial tasks were delegated by agreement to other regional establishments, bodies or institutions, the results fed back and further steps agreed. This feed-back took place e.g. in the CET for women project: partial tasks were assumed by other fora which dealt with the improvement of training and employment of women, among others. Cooperation was established with a regional body representing relevant institutions, e.g. chambers of trade, industry or crafts, trade unions and women's groups.

Considerations to more firmly regulate cooperation among partners and perhaps draw up statutes, rules of procedure or a fixed organizational structure, triggered both legal problems (who is entitled to represent whom? voting procedures?, etc.) and would also have meant spelling out many foreseeable problems. Efforts to institutionalize cooperation would have reduced a considerable amount of the spontaneous commitment of many of the players and swallowed up energy and time for discussions urgently required elsewhere.

The above project reports reflect an ongoing process of development: in particular in the framework of the regularly repeated computer info week, the transition can be observed from a phase of reservation ("I'm not going to give anything away...") to more openness and dynamism. Cooperation in this context means the capacity of the players to implement joint problem solutions and thereby to redefine decision-making constraints as solutions in the context of a consensus and to constructively apply these solutions together.

The difficult role of the CETCC as a "neutral broker" between the various cooperation partners was evident e.g. in the phase of the literacy project during which the course leaders tried to use the counselling centre as a mouthpiece for the articulation of their interests.

A further example were the difficulties in the CET for women project, in the context of which both the "wrong" gender of the counsellor as contact partner and the presumption that the CETCC was taking sides with the AEC led to misunderstandings; moreover it was also insinuated that the CETCC was meddling in the organizing bodies' internal affairs in this project. These conflicts were settled because the fundamental interest in sharing experience organized by a neutral body was stronger than bickering about petty competition strategies which have always existed and shall continue to exist in the future.

An important and striking point is that the CET

establishments involved as cooperation partners in the literacy, CET for women and educational/training leave projects were mainly public bodies, whereas a whole series of commercial CET establishments cooperated in the new technologies project. The reason for this presumably lies in the subject area of new technologies, which offers an important spectrum for the provision of in particular commercial CET establishments.

Critical situations emerged if a specific institution or the CETCC was particularly highlighted by media coverage.

6.3 Consequences for the infrastructure and job market of the region

The activities of the cooperation projects discussed in this report triggered an increasing number of CET programmes which have become part and parcel of established provision in Cologne and beyond the Cologne area. Moreover, both the demand and the need for these education/training schemes have increased, above all as a result of comprehensive PR and target group work. In the literacy field, provision has increased from 4 to 57 courses at 34 course locations within four years. 33 comprehensive course programmes were delivered between 1984 and 89 in the field of CET for women. It is to be assumed that the increase of target group-specific CET provision has improved individual skill levels and therefore enhanced individuals' labour market opportunities in the region. Among CET organizing bodies

and in the CET counselling arena, an awareness has been created for new education/training policy subjects and, as a result, the courage has emerged to tackle these fields together and transpose them into new targets. On the basis of the extension of course provision and its impact, both on individuals and on general labour market policy, it can be concluded that CET is meaningful and necessary as an educational policy impetus for the CET infrastructure.

These results were only achieved because CET counselling was not limited to merely individual counselling, but fed back its experience and the conclusions from its work with target groups and institutions into cooperation with CET establishments. The impetus provided by the CETCC triggered the ongoing development of a network of cooperation relations.

A point which definitely also contributed to the success of this process, as we weigh up the positive and negative aspects, was the keen interest of the partners in the cooperation projects in prioritizing the search for compromise, rather than getting bogged down in conflict to ensure that their mutual aims would not be jeopardized.

As a coordination unit, the CETCC respected the autonomy of the CET organizing bodies and eased their burden in terms of organization, personnel and content. The CETCC offered input-intensive services to all the projects. The strategy of not calling the independence of the participating establishments into question, on the one

hand, but making the process of cooperation in the various problem areas binding, on the other, paid off. The CETCC gained acceptance as the initiator of new programmes and initiatives, especially since it eased the burden on the CET establishments in certain working areas. The neutral function and municipal status of the CETCC made it easier for the establishments to accept its services and to set aside problems of competition.

By establishing cooperation projects, municipal CET counselling thereby contributes to upgrading the regional infrastructure and constitutes an important factor for the improvement of potential employment opportunities and regional development in the framework of CET.

The results of the cooperation projects are funnelled into regional CET development planning and are clearly transposed into the CET structures of the region, thereby helping to specify the uncommittal and abstract legislative objectives of CET development planning, and giving it relevance to action within the region.

6.4 Conclusion

With a large number of CET establishments and relevant institutions, as a result of the pluralistic system, the CET infrastructure of a region is generally characterized by:

- competition

- a lack of transparency of provision
- provision deficits in education/training policy problem areas.

In order to influence the development of CET infrastructures in the regional context, institutional counselling is a central working area of the CETCC, i.e. it cooperates with the CET establishments and relevant institutions with a view to finding solutions to certain education/training policy problems. The conditions for this cooperation between the CETCC and CET establishments are as follows:

- the counselling centre must be independent of organizing bodies, i.e. it must be a critical body, cooperating with CET establishments on a neutral basis
- the counselling centre must be accepted, i.e. it must have a positive institutional status
- the CET counselling centre must provide its own services, e.g. by determination of CET needs.

This type of cooperation, which involves facilitating to a greater extent than coordinating and may be open or institutionalized, has the following regional impact:

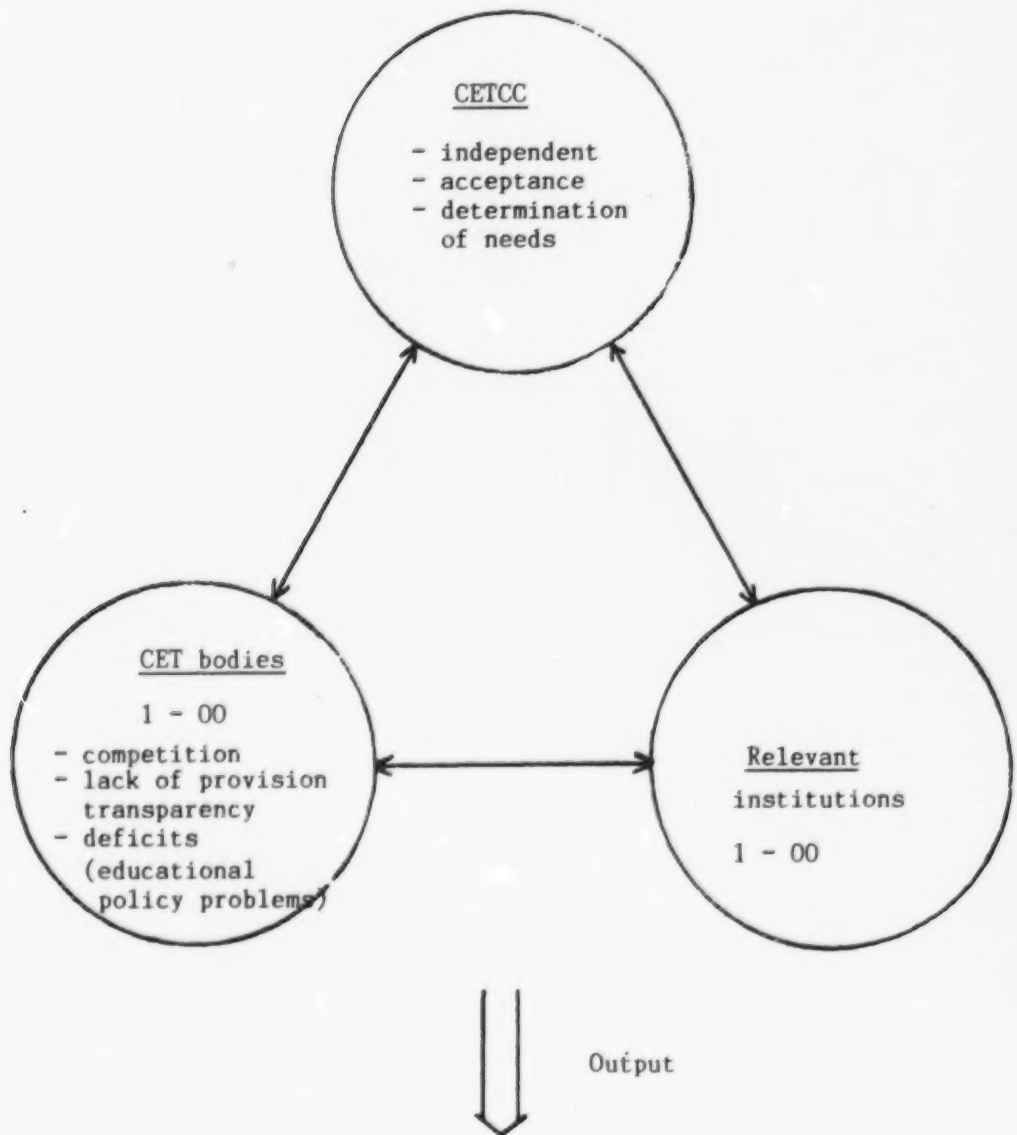
- increased provision for the educationally and socially disadvantaged (e.g. preliminary remedial schemes)

- transparency of the CET market for its users
- the reduction of competition between CET establishments (see the diagram below).

The counselling centre thereby follows the path traced in the Joint Opinion of the social partners of all Community Member States on access to continuing vocational training in the framework of the taskforce in 1991 which explicitly highlights, among others, the promotion of the following objectives:

- training and continuing training as central features of regional development
- adaptation of continuing education and training to the special conditions (demographic, ecological, etc.) of the regional job market
- the establishment of a better match between determined skill needs and training provision at regional level, including the transition from initial to continuing training...
- the creation of regional units to provide counselling and information on the possibilities of determining skill requirements and CET provision with special reference to the specific problems of small-scale enterprises, craftsmen and the self-employed.

The CETCC's facilitating cooperation with
CET bodies and relevant institutions



Change in CET infrastructure

- additional CET provision for the educationally and socially disadvantaged
- transparency
- reduction of competition

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- course provision, participant structure and efficacy.

- * Alphabetisierung- und Grundlagenkurse für Erwachsene in Köln und Umgebung
- literacy and basic courses for adults in the Cologne area.

- * Arbeitsmaterialien für die Alphabetisierung Erwachsener
- teaching aids for adult literacy programmes.

- * Erfahrungsbericht über das Kooperationsmodell
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- * Frauenkursprogramme
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- * Wiedereinstieg ins Erwerbsleben
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- * Zwischen(t)raum
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 - participation of workers from other Federal States in schemes in the framework of the Educational/Training Leave Act.

- * Bildungsurlaub in NRW
 - Tips on the Educational/Training Leave Act.

- * Neue Chance: Bildungsurlaub
 - information on the NRW Educational/Training Leave Act.

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